MEDIEVALISM IN THE WORKS OF DAVID JONES AND CHARLES WILLIAMS : A STUDY IN LITERARY TRADITION

by

Athell C.C. Murray

Dissertation presented for the degree of M. Litt.
in the University of Glasgow

Lammas, 1970

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

P R E F A C E

My interest in David Jones and Charles Williams is not simply to assess their individual contributions to the literary scene; but also to elucidate, through the study of their works, the way in which a tradition, dominant in the literature of one century, may yet survive into that of the next, however much modified. "Medievalism", I believe, is a crucial factor in the work of both Jones and Williams. They differ from one another in their approach to the subject; and together, they differ from the approach most characteristic of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, they represent a development of, rather than a revolt from, nineteenth century ideas. Part of the interest of such a study as I have undertaken is to assess the tension between the influence of tradition upon an artist, and the influence of the current literary situation.

As neither David Jones nor Charles Williams is as yet widely known, I feel it advisable to append the following brief biographical notes on each of them.

David Jones was born in Brockley, Kent, on November 1, 1895. From 1910 to 1914 he attended Camberwell School of Art; and from 1919 to 1921, the Westminster Art School. During the intervening years, 1915 to 1918, he served with the 15th Bn. Royal Welsh Fusiliers on the Western Front. In 1921 he became a Roman Catholic.

He has since acquired a considerable reputation, first as a painter, and then latterly as a writer.

Charles Walter Stansby Williams was born in London on September 20, 1886. From 1908 to 1945 he served on the editorial staff of the Oxford University Press, Amen House, London. He married Florence Conwy in 1917. An honorary M.A. was conferred upon him by Oxford University in 1943. He died on May 15, 1945, in Oxford, where he is buried.

I am greatly indebted to several people for their assistance in preparing this dissertation. My chief debt of gratitude is due to my supervisor, Professor H.M. Butler, who not only is responsible for introducing me to the works of David Jones, but has throughout patiently and sensitively guided my efforts. Professor E.L.G. Stones has been extremely generous with his time. He has answered my many queries and advised on many technical details. I have also derived a great deal of stimulation from discussion with Mr. J.A.W. Bennett, Adviser to Graduate Students. Mr. D.G. Bowen, Lecturer in Welsh Language and Literature, has also assisted me in the collection of material. I am grateful to Mrs. Pepper, secretary to the Department of Humanity, for undertaking to type the manuscript. I also wish to record my gratitude to the University of Glasgow for the financial assistance they have given me by the award of the Ivie Fellowship.

Also, the University Library staff have been most helpful. Finally, my thanks are due to my parents without whose patience, understanding, and co-operation this project would never have been realized.

A NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations for the works of David Jones and Charles Williams have been used throughout the text.

David Jones

In P. = In Parenthesis, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1937.

Ana. = The Anathemata, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1952.

Charles Williams

EH. = Religion through Letters, London: Oxford University Press, 1938.

SS. = The Region of the Summer Stars, London: Oxford University Press, 1950 (First pub. Poetry [London] Editions, 1944).

For Charles Williams, I have frequently used editions other than the first. The editions cited in my text have been given in the Bibliography, together with the date of first publication wherever this is not the same.

C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION

Of the many strands that weave through English literature, enriching and giving depth to its content, one of the strongest has been the influence of the Middle Ages. In considering the use made of "medievalism" by the two twentieth century writers chosen for my study, David Jones and Charles Williams, I feel a definition of my concept of this term is required.

> C.S. Lewis in his work, The Allegory of Love, has written :
>
> Those phantom periods for which the historian searches in vain - the Rome and Greece that the Middle Ages believed in, the British past of Malory and Spenser, the Middle Age itself as it was conceived by the romantic revival - all these have their place in a history more momentous than that which commonly bears the name.[1]

That history to which C.S. Lewis refers is the history of man's sensibility in respect of the past; and of the way in which the human imagination has expressed itself through, and been nurtured by, its concepts of the past. C.S. Lewis suggests that nineteenth century "medievalism" is one such projection of the human imagination. To define in a sentence what is meant by "medievalism" can perhaps only be done by taking, as Lewis does, what the concept implied at the height of its vogue, and comparing it with similar phenomena in European literary history. It is closely associated with the return to classical mythology in the nineteenth century which has been studied by Douglas Bush in his book, Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry. The first obvious

---

1. New York, 1958 (first pub. 1936), p.24.

statement to make is that "medievalism" is co-eval with the romantic revival, and was "a part of that tidal wave of primitivistic and idealistic sentiment which moved over Europe."[2] Beyond this it is difficult to proceed without recounting the evolution of the term over the past two centuries. The study of "mediovalism" suffers from uncertainty as to precisely which period of the past it is that inspiration is being drawn from. H. St. L.B. Moss, writing in 1935, remarks that a variety of dates from the third to the eighth century has been given as the commencement of the Middle Ages. He opts for A.D. 395.[3] This is representative of twentieth century scholarship. However, it is necessary to appreciate that for much of the eighteenth century the term "Middle Ages" referred as much to Spenser as to Chaucer. Perhaps, as a starting-point for this discussion the term should be taken literally, and in the sense implied by the post-Renaissance scholars who first used it[4] - the centuries intervening between two periods of acknowledged achievement, between "the classical civilization of Greece and Rome and the civilization of modern Europe."[5]

Throughout the eighteenth century a revolution in literary sensibility was being accomplished. Several factors, all tending in the same direction, contributed to the success of the development. One of the earliest

---

2. Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry (New York, 1937), p.xiv.

3. The Birth of the Middle Ages (London, 1935), pp.v-vi.

4. For the first recorded instances of "the Middle Age" and "the Middle Ages," the S.O.E.D. (3rd ed. rev., Oxford, 1955), gives 1621 and 1722 respectively.

5. Christopher Dawson, "The Study of Christian Culture," in Medieval Essays (London, 1953), p.1.

evidences of it was a paper written by Joseph Addison for The Spectator (No. 419) in 1712, in which he defended what Dryden had called "the Fairy Way of Writing." Addison argues on behalf of the marvellous in poetry, against the rationalism of people such as Thomas Hobbes and Thomas Sprat. The latter in his History of the Royal Society (London, 1667) inveighs against "those wild Inhabitants of the false Worlds, that us'd to astonish the Minds of Men." Addison, though he defends much of the machinery later to be associated with "medievalism," such as "witchcraft, prodigies, charms, and enchantments," does so in a Renaissance context, referring specifically to Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. The paper is more indicative of the sensitivity of Addison's taste in recognising how "agreeable an imposture" the marvellous may be, despite the current of his age, than of any serious attempt to claim for it a primacy among modes of writing.

Much more strenuous efforts were made by Thomas Warton and Richard Hurd in the mid-century to give proper credit to works which did not conform to strictly rationalistic tenets. They attempted to view such earlier writings in an historical perspective. Of itself this necessitated a clearer concept of what they were defending, and their use of the term "Gothic" denotes one of the earliest non-pejorative conceptions of "medievalism."[6] Three major writings are connected with their names: Warton's Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser (1754), his History

---

6. The O.E.D. gives 1827 and 1853 for the first recorded instances of "mediæval" and "mediævalism" respectively.

of English Poetry (1774-81), and Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance (1762). From these it is clear that with the exception of a respect for Chaucer, their minds were, like Addison's, very much Renaissance orientated. This was to remain a feature of "medievalism" till at least the time of Keats. For instance, both Southey and Scott were stirred in their youth by their reading of Spenser, Tasso, and Ariosto, and Spenser was a powerful influence upon Keats himself. It is this fact which prompted C.S. Lewis to say of Spenser that he was "the great mediator between the Middle Ages and the modern poets, the man who saved us from the catastrophe of too thorough a renaissance."[7]

There is another aspect to the influence of Spenser. It was the example of his style which encouraged poets such as James Thomson in The Castle of Indolence to break from neo-classic strictness and indulge in a more lavish description. Professor John Butt wrote : "It is the new voluptuousness in Thomson's work that Spenser is responsible for re-leasing."[8] Landscape is beginning to be exploited for its power to evoke atmosphere.

That Hurd was himself fundamentally aware of a distinction between Renaissance poets writing in a medieval tradition, and poets of the Middle Ages as such, is clear from the following passage :

> ... after all Spenser and Tasso came too late, and it was impossible for them to paint truly and perfectly what was no longer seen or believed....

---

7. Lewis, Allegory, p.360.
8. The Augustan Age, 2nd ed. (London, 1962), p.103.

Despite this, Hurd continued to look primarily to the Elizabethan world of "Gothic knights" for what he admired in literature. For him, the Gothic was a source of "sublimity." This emphasis upon "the sublime" was largely responsible for transforming a change in taste, and a greater historical sense in criticism, into a new and positive force in English literature; which in turn gave a new incentive to explore the past. Hurd declared that "Gothic manners and machinery" compared with Classical "have, by their nature and genius, the advantage of the latter in producing the sublime." This is part of the general reorientation of critical premises accomplished in the eighteenth century. The ideas of Longinus now began seriously to influence the situation, and emphasis was placed upon the emotions, upon passion and spontaneity in writing. Part of the intellectual machinery of the new movement was to posit a significant difference between the activity of the imagination and the activity of the reason as manifested in the allegedly contrary spheres of poetry and philosophy. For example, in 1796, in an essay entitled "Is Verse Essential to Poetry?" which appeared in the Monthly Mirror, the Rev. William Enfield wrote :

> Verse is, properly, the contrary of prose; and because poetry speaks the language of fancy, passion, and sentiment, and philosophy speaks the language of reason, these two terms should be considered as contraries, and writing should be divided, not into poetry and prose, but into poetry and philosophy.

This is, in principle, the distinction anticipated by Vico in his Scienza Nuova (1725).

To this primary distinction, the eighteenth century gave an additional and peculiar turn. Theorists such as Giambattista Vico, Thomas Blackwell, and later, Hugh Blair, searching for the origins of language and poetry, declared them to be co-eval. The sublime, at its least diluted through sophistication and art, was to be found in the beginnings of poetry, in the instinctive expression of the emotions in the early stages of the history of any people. This view has been termed "chronological primitivism," and gave considerable incentive to the study of past literatures. The Middle Ages benefited most, for despite Gray's allusion to "the savage Youth" in "Child's boundless forests" (The Progress of Poesy), "cultural primitivism," the study of contemporary primitive societies, had not as yet to any great extent captured the literary imagination. In a modified form, "cultural primitivism" was to lead Wordsworth to the simpler rural life of the Lakelander. There is, of course, Collins's Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland. In itself the poem is another manifestation of interest in Britain's Celtic fringe. For the eighteenth century the most accessible source of the "primitive" was their own European past.

Catering to this taste were the antiquarian frauds practised upon the public by Macpherson and Chatterton. W.P. Ker has warned against confusing what he considers the undoubted charm of the Ossianic and Rowley poems with the authentic spirit of medieval literature.[9] To an

---

9. See W.P. Ker, "The Literary Influence of the Middle Ages," in The Cambridge History of English Literature, edd. A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller, X (Cambridge, 1913), 228-229. Hereafter cited as Ker, Cambridge History, Vol. X.

extent, genuine medieval literature was being made available to the eighteenth century reader. Of Old Norse poetry a start was made with Percy's Five Pieces of Runic Poetry in 1763. The following year Evans produced his Specimens of the Poetry of Ancient Welsh Bards and in 1789 Charlotte Brooke's Reliques of Irish Poetry was published. Percy brought out his Reliques of Ancient English Poetry in 1765.

As yet, little original English poetry was composed using the medieval background which was gradually being uncovered. Indeed, Hurd had advised "no modern poet to revive these fancy tales" in his own inhospitable age. There was current a spurious medievalism in the Gothic novel, as represented by Horace Walpole's Castle of Otranto (1764) and Clara Reeve's Old English Baron (1777). The "marvellous" is used to create an atmosphere of mystery impregnated with the power of the supernatural and not in an indefinite past. Lack of any real purpose save that of entertaining by breaking with the established tradition of the novel, and lack of any firm historical basis (more essential to the novel than to poetry), led to the Gothic novel only affecting the sensational which in Clara Reeve's case even tended to be insipid.

It is because of the uniqueness of his contribution that Thomas Gray must figure prominently in any study of eighteenth century medievalism. The spirit of his Bard is claimed to have captured much of the quality of the ancient Welsh and Norse verse which, as a scholar, he had studied. Moreover, he displays in it a sense for the factual in medieval history, and manipulates his knowledge in a fashion consistent with the supposed setting of the poem, as a prophetic utterance. As the events

forecast increase in distance from the date of the bard who is declaring them, so they become less explicit. Like Arnold, with whom I feel as far as poetic sensibility is concerned he had much in common, Gray was attracted to that in the past which enabled him to express his own melancholy. He did not relate his thoughts upon the past, but allowed it to elicit them from him. As far as his translations are concerned he appears to have been the most notable English poet before David Jones to have been drawn to The Gododdin; while the prestige he enjoyed did much to popularise Old Norse poetry through his Fatal Sisters and Descent of Odin. But, as W.P. Ker emphasises, what there is of medieval in Macpherson's Ossianic poems, or in the translations of Gray, relates but little to what, up to the time of Ker's writing in 1913, was popularly understood by medieval : "it was not till after Macpherson that the chivalrous Middle Ages - the world of Ivanhoe or The Talisman, of Lohengrin or Tannhäuser - came to their own again."[10] A considerable period of time was to elapse before English literature returned to the initiative of Gray. There is much justification for Donald Davie's claim that "however far from scientific strictness in their operations, the Macphersons and Percies and their readers are the ancestors of the scientific anthropologists and archaeologists of today."[11] This is not to suggest that there is a break between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries - rather it is to forestall the view that twentieth century medievalism

---

10. Ker, Cambridge History, X, 227.
11. Donald Davie, ed. with intro. The late Augustans (London, 1959), p.xvi

bears no relation to that of the eighteenth century. In fact, the central ideas of the latter century have come back into prominence at different times in the subsequent course of English literary history.

Margaret J.M. Reid in The Arthurian Legend has written that "the living link between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century is the Ballad."[12] As far as this is concerned, the most important event of the former century was the publication of Percy's Reliques. Wordsworth, in his Essay, Supplementary to the Preface, said of Percy's collection that as "for our own country, its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it." Yet, Wordsworth is not notable for any element of medievalism in his work. The answer is that Percy's influence upon Wordsworth was probably of a general nature. The success of Percy's Reliques had done much to establish the literary seriousness of the ballad-form, to give it critical status. But, more specifically, the Reliques were responsible for the revival of only one of the two forms in which the ballad was known to the eighteenth century. To distinguish these, I shall use the terminology of Karl Kroeber in Romantic Narrative Art. They are the "historical" and the "adventurous" forms of the ballad.[13] The latter constitutes the living tradition of the broadsheet ballad, and it is this which Wordsworth inherited. Kroeber writes: "Wordsworth relies on the simplicity of the ballad as a technique for dramatizing the essential conditions of human experience."[14] There is, in

---

12. Edinburgh [1930], p.12.
13. Madison, 1960, p.21.
14. Kroeber, Romantic Narrative Art, p.42.

his work, little emphasis upon antiquarianism. In this respect, the true disciple of Percy was Coleridge. W.P. Ker says that "it was through Percy's Reliques that the Middle Ages really came to have an influence in modern poetry.... What they did may be found in The Ancient Mariner...."[15] Another critic has said

> that in the original volume of the Lyrical Ballads "The Ancient Mariner" is the only poem which derives its style from the traditional ballads as they were then available in Percy, rather than from the later ballad of broadsheet.[16]

Though an "historical ballad," it must be distinguished from the mere imitation of the traditional ballad such as is found in Chatterton's Bristowe Tragedie. Coleridge is not primarily concerned to impose upon his readers' credulity by exacting an authentic evocation of the medieval world. Rather, he is anxious to exploit the gulf between past and present in order to create for his poem a strange, autonomous world of its own.

The influence of "the German spook balladry"[17] of the last quarter of the eighteenth century may be discerned in the effort of the supernatural which Coleridge achieves in The Ancient Mariner. In Germany the influence of Percy's Reliques, Macpherson's Ossian, and of the Gothic novel, had produced an interest in the Middle Ages which gave rise to a vogue for sensational, pseudo-medieval ballads. Perhaps the most famous

---

15. Ker, Cambridge History, X, 254.
16. Humphry House, "The Ancient Mariner," printed in English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. M.H. Abrams (New York, 1960), p.172.
17. Hoxie N. Fairchild, The Romantic Quest (Philadelphia, 1931), p.260.

of these was Bürger's Lenore which Sir Walter Scott translated in 1796. Scott's contact, first with Percy's Reliques and then with contemporary German literature, encouraged his own interest in the ballads of the south of Scotland. In 1802 and 1803 appeared his Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border in which many of these were first published.

About this time Scott heard Sir John Stoddart read a passage from Coleridge's Christabel from a manuscript copy. Of this work, Henry A. Beers wrote : "If 'The Ancient Mariner' is a ballad, 'Christabel' is, in form, a roman d'aventures, or metrical chivalry tale...."[10] However, the interest of Coleridge's poem resides in its rich ambiguity, in its mingling of the natural and the supernatural. Though apparently purporting to be no more than a thrilling story, Christabel contains hints of a deeper significance. In fact, the poem comes near to being a myth of the effect of evil upon innocence.

Scott's series of verse romances which began in 1805 with The Lay of the Last Minstrel, though similar in form to Christabel, differ considerably from that poem in spirit. This may be at least partly attributable to yet another strand of medieval influence upon Scott, namely, his early enthusiasm for Spenser. In 1762 Thomas Warton had written a Postscript to his Observations on the Faerie Queene that

> these compositions [deriving from an earlier period of English literature]... preserve many curious historical facts, and throw considerable light on the nature of the feudal

---

10. A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1902), p.61.

> system. They are the pictures of ancient usages and customs; and represent the manners, genius, and character of our ancestors....

In the hands of someone with antiquarian interests, the influence of such earlier works could produce a poem like Scott's Marmion which was intended, as the author says in his Advertisement, "to paint the manners of the feudal times." The evocation of period is a very important aspect of Scott's writings, and this he did to a large extent through his descriptions of habits of dress, types of architecture, modes of combat, and local customs. Hoxie N. Fairchild writes:

> Scott's tremendous influence as a popularizer of the Middle Ages was due not only to the positive merits of his poems but also to the fact that he exploited chiefly those elements of the past which any normal reader of his own day would have found picturesque and exciting. He introduced the romantic past to thousands who would have recoiled from the queerness of Coleridge's Christabel.[19]

Picturesque detail and narrative vigour are what characterize not only Scott's verse romances, but also his historical novels, such as Ivanhoe. In poetry, he does not seem to have had many notable successors, unless the Hoxie of The Earthly Paradise. However, so far as the novel is concerned, many books were produced after the pattern of a typical Scott romance like Ivanhoe. Of these, possibly the greatest is Charles Reade's The Cloister and the Hearth. The ability to appreciate historical periods other than one's own was one of the major contributions Scott made

---

19. Fairchild, Romantic Quest, p.263.

to modern thought. R.G. Collingwood has written :

> When one compares... the complete lack of any sympathy for the Middle Ages shown by Hume with the intense sympathy for the same thing which is found in Sir Walter Scott, one can see how this tendency of Romanticism [to appreciate the intrinsic worth of any period of the past] had enriched its historical outlook.[20]

Yet, Scott's most important contribution to serious literature was more profound even than this. As Karl Kroeber says of him :

> He did not merely make it possible to write novels about the Crusades; he made it possible to describe any society in its temporal dimensions.... The Waverley novels did not teach later novelists how to reconstruct the past. It taught them to see the present as it would appear to the future. For when Scott tells us a story of olden times, he treats those times not as statically quaint and remote but as the conclusion of still older ways and as the beginning of present ways.[21]

Scott, particularly in his novels of seventeenth and eighteenth century Scotland, taught how society should be seen in relation to historical process, and how that process works itself out in individual lives. So far as English literary history is concerned, Scott's influence has been most seriously felt in the tradition of the regional novel. Here, he himself derives from Maria Edgeworth's Irish novels. As Henry A. Beers has said, "the key to Scott's romanticism is his intense local feeling.

---

20. The Idea of History (Oxford, 1946), p.87.
21. Kroeber, Romantic Narrative Art, pp.100-101.

that attachment to place which, in most men, is a sort of animal instinct, was with him a passion."[22]

This clearly separates Scott both from Coleridge and from Keats. Christabel suffers in the second part because it gradually becomes attached to a particular locality, thereby losing some of its peculiar power as a myth of the spirit. Keats never fails as regards rich sensuous imagery; but, in The Eve of St. Agnes, for instance, this is used to create an essentially timeless world. Medieval trappings are used to embody the power of the imagination. Keats was indebted to Coleridge's influence, but he had little real liking for Scott. His medievalism came to him largely through Spenser, whom he appreciated for his descriptive powers rather than from antiquarian motives.

When Keats turned to the ballad in La Belle Dame Sans Merci, he was using a form which by then had became a new literary genre. His success is not due to the antiquarian exactness of his ballad. Keats takes advantage of the remoteness of the period in which the action of his poem takes place, to create a sense of the whole incident belonging to a timeless realm. Moreover, he expresses his own ideas by identifying them with the spirit of mystery and wonder which frequently characterized the traditional ballad. Of Keats's poem, Knoepflmacher writes that it "is an imaginative re-enactment [of the past] and in that sense an original creation, not... an imitation whose first appeal is to our credulity."[23]

---

22. 22. Beers, English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century, p.8.
23. 23. Knoepflmacher, Romantic Narrative Art, p.45.

This ability to make the past one's own, to be master of the material one is using without violating its integrity, is what tends to characterise the most successful use of medievalism. As John D. Hunt says in The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination, "Keats avoids pastiche in La Belle Dame Sans Merci by using the ballad form and situation to dramatise a personal despair and sadness."[24] This was much less successfully done by Rossetti. Of his ballads, Graham Hough has this to say :

> for all their good workmanship, they are pastiche.... The intense appreciation of an earlier literature that led Rossetti to this kind of imitation has of course its proper sphere of activity : it is in translation. It is not very important to do in English as a literary exercise what has already been done in English as the expression of a first-hand experience.[25]

The aspect of Rossetti's medievalism which is most interesting is that connected with the Oxford Movement. This, in itself, owed much to the early nineteenth century concern with the Middle Ages. Scott was greatly admired by Newman, though the latter tended in theological matters to base his ideas upon those of the Patristic Age rather than upon those of the medieval period. On the other hand, Hurrel Froude turned to the Catholicism of the High Middle Ages. He was influenced by the Frenchman, Montalembert, who led a Catholic revival in early nineteenth century France, and emphasised the need to study Christian culture. Typical of the close relationship between the rise of the Oxford Movement and the

---

24. London, 1968, p.53.
25. The Last Romantics (London, 1949), p.71.

current interest in the Middle Ages are the careers of two men, Kenelm Digby and Augustus Pugin. The one was drawn to the Catholic faith through "the study of mediaeval antiquities and scholastic philosophy"; the other, through "his love of Gothic architecture."[26]

Even as the impulse towards Catholicism was partly an intellectual and partly an aesthetic one, so the Anglo-Catholic movement had intellectual and aesthetic repercussions. To take the intellectual aspect first, Raymond Chapman has written: "Through him [i.e. E.B. Pusey], and through its influence on men like R.W. Church, R.C. Trench and William Stubbs, the movement was important in factual and expository writing."[27] Not only did the Tractarians return to base their beliefs upon a medieval foundation, but they were also responsible for an extension of modern knowledge of the Middle Ages. Chapman also notes an interesting side-effect of the prevailing religious controversy:

> A story of Constantinople, Theodora Phrantza (1653-1654), is part of the quest of J.H. Neale to find links with the Orthodox Church and thus by-pass Roman claims to sole Catholicity.[28]

In 1939, H. St. L.B. Moss said in his Preface to The Birth of the Middle Ages that the neglect of Byzantine civilisation was at last being rectified. Probably both a cause and a symptom of this change was the Anglican-Orthodox entente to which T.S. Eliot alludes in his Thoughts after Lambeth.

---

26. Roots, English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century, p.363.
27. The Victorian Debate: English Literature and Society (London, 1968), p.261.
28. Ibid., p.261.

As for the aesthetic aspect of the Anglo-Catholic movement, Chapman has written that it "owed almost as much to Romanticism as to theology. It came to many as a liberation from the artistic... atmosphere which popular Evangelicalism had imposed...."[29] This is the aspect which is most evident in the religious sympathies of a Rossetti or a Pater. Hoxie N. Fairchild has written:

> Sundered from the dogmatic and ascetic aspects of religion, ritualism had... [an] unfortunate result: it enabled non-Christian aesthetes to obscure the confrontation of belief and unbelief by using the atmosphere and trappings of Litur-gical worship as part of the studio paraphernalia of art for art's sake. If the Catholic Revival produced Newman and Christina Rossetti, it was also partly responsible for Pater and Dante Gabriel.[30]

This may be illustrated from a comparison of the 1870 and 1881 versions of the third sonnet in Rossetti's House of Life. It is entitled Love's Redemption. For the first three lines, the earlier version reads:

> O thou who at Love's hour ecstatically
> Unto my lips dost evermore present
> The body and blood of Love in sacrament...;

whereas the later version has:

> O thou who at Love's hour ecstatically
> Unto my heart dost evermore present
> Clothed with his fire, thy heart his testament....

---

29. Ibid., p.250.
30. Religious Trends in English Poetry, IV (New York, 1957), 294.

Or again, in 1870, the seventh and eighth lines were :

... thy life with mine has blent,
And murmured o'er the cup, Remember me! -

as compared with :

... thy life with mine has blent,
And murmured, "I am thine, thou'rt one with me!"

in 1881. The language of the Church's principal sacrament is being applied to an earthly love. The emotive aspect of language is being exploited, with no feeling for its deeper significances.

Rossetti's medievalism suffers from a related superficiality. Sometimes medieval detail is introduced purely for its decorative effect. This is true of those notorious lines from The Blessed Damozel :

She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Probably, Rossetti's medievalism was most successful where, as in The House of Life, he was able to use as his model a poet of the earlier period whose temperament and problems were similar to his own. That poet was, of course, Dante. Yet, despite all that Rossetti did to promote Dante with the British public, and to learn from his technique, he was incapable of subsuming an earthly passion in a spiritual one and still leaving both intact. As in Love's Redemption, for all Rossetti's striving, the spiritual side usually gives way to the earthly. What is of value in the record Rossetti has left of the tension between the two; but of the profound resolution found in Dante, there is little hint.

For William Morris, especially in his prose works, the Middle Ages symbolized his ideal of society. His descriptions of the Middle Ages are not merely for decorative effect. The details of his descriptions embody for him those values for which he looks in vain in the contemporary scene. His Dream of John Ball (1888) utilizes an idealized past as an incentive towards the creation of a better present which would embody his concept of socialism. An important aspect of Morris's socialism is his concern for the dignity of the workman, for the encouragement of his individual initiative. Thus he championed craftsmanship as opposed to highly organized industrial production. Morris believed that the medieval workman was "a free man," whereas his modern counterpart is "a slave."[31] Perhaps Morris's best literary embodiment of his ideal is in News from Nowhere (1891) where he pictures a Utopia of the future, characterized by all those features of the Middle Ages of which he approved.

He was greatly influenced by Ruskin, especially by the latter's chapter, "On the Nature of Gothic," in Volume II of The Stones of Venice. This provided an intellectual and non-Catholic justification for a return to Gothic architecture. In it Ruskin made the same points about the relation of the workmen to society as were subsequently to preoccupy Morris. A typical passage from "On the Nature of Gothic" is the following:

> Go forth again to gaze upon the old cathedral front, where you have smiled so often at the fantastic ignorance of the

31. Hough, Last Romantics, p.89.

> old sculptors : examine once more those ugly goblins, and formless monstors, and stern statues, anatomiless and rigid; but do not mock at them, for they are signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought and rank in the scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure; but which it must be the first aim of all Europe at this day to regain for her children.

One important reason for the emphasis during this period upon the art and architecture of the Middle Ages was an increasing awareness of the ugliness of the contemporary scene. The tangible remains of the medieval period were what tended to stimulate the creative artist. The attitude is, in fact, an intensification of Wordsworth's interest in "a mouldering pile with fractured arch."[32]

Both Morris and Rossetti were enthusiastic about the poetry of Keats. The latter had been much preoccupied with the apparent antithesis of art and reality. Yet he had confidence in his own artistic endeavour; for he saw the artist, in so far as his creative activity was concerned, in the role of God, and the resultant work of art as the equivalent of the Creation itself. This way of considering creative writing was hinted at as early as 1712 by Addison when he talked of "the Fairy Way of Writing" being able to lead the reader "into a new creation." The Pre-Raphaelite use of medieval imagery was in many respects similar in spirit to that of Keats. Their

---

32. The Prelude, Book XI, line 105.

> return to earlier ages was an attempt to find a means of exploring depths of feeling which Victorian life seemed to deny them. The daily existence of their age seemed to have little of that spiritual and human significance which life had apparently held for such artists as Dante and Giotto.[33]

The difficulty with the Pre-Raphaelites is that they frequently appear to have lacked the confidence to "create a world of its own, complete in itself, answerable to its own laws, or happy in its own anarchy."[34] Too often they depended upon the framework of the dream to justify their excursions into a fictional world. Unlike both Coleridge and Keats, they seldom realised their pictures of the Middle Ages vividly enough to make of it a fully autonomous world. A certain artificiality, a self-consciousness, is present even in the best of their works.

The most ambitious use made of medievalism by any Victorian is to be found in Tennyson's Idylls of the King. Their historical significance lies in the fact that they are an attempt to use medieval material to compose a myth capable of embodying the highest ideals of the nineteenth century. Until the mid-nineteenth century poets had still tended to use Classical mythology, though not altogether satisfied with the medium. Meyer H. Abrams writes that for the early nineteenth century "the main problem concerning the pagan gods has come to be their adequacy as symbols and means of expression, to the poet himself."[35] Faced with

---

33. Hunt, Pre-Raphaelite Imagination, p.126.
34. Hough, Last Romantics, p.70.
35. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York, 1958), p.295.

this problem, Blake invented his own mythe. Coleridge turned back to the Middle Ages, and was able to produce a work like Christabel. That Tennyson should have turned to the Middle Ages and not to Classical myth is probably largely a result of the vogue created for that period by Scott, Coleridge, and Keats. The Idylls are overtly symbolical. Through the tangled affair of Lancelot, Guinevere, and Arthur, Tennyson tried to express his thoughts upon marriage and morality. Yet the success of his work is probably not to be found there. Rather it inheres in the way he has linked the literary setting of the Arthurian legend to the vivid natural detail of his symbolic landscapes. However, the elegiac tone of the last three Books would appear to express his deepest feelings about Victorian Britain. Of other attempts to use medieval narrative symbolically, the most notable is Swinburne's Tristram and Iseult, which embodies the poet's views on love and fate.

The choice of Arthurian subject matter by both these poets testifies to the strength of that particular aspect of the medievalism of the nineteenth century. For example, in the period 1816 to 1817, three editions of Malory appeared. Sir Walter Scott's Bridal of Triermain (1809) is one of the first relatively successful attempts at an Arthurian poem by a major writer. One of the important functions performed by medievalism for the nineteenth century was to allow the poet greater freedom to express himself with regard to the whole range of emotional experience. Romantic theory had laid great emphasis upon "the concept that poetry is the expression of feeling, or of the human spirit, or of an impassioned

state of mind and imagination."[36] Victorian convention made it difficult to discuss the emotion of love between the sexes in contemporary terms, and thus, for example, the "convention of courtly love made it possible for William Morris to undertake the Defence of Guinevere."[37] A twentieth century extension of this is to be found in the application of psychological realism by E.A. Robinson to the lovers in his Tristram (1928). The treatment of the Matter of Britain up to the time of Masefield shows the popularity enjoyed by narrative verse, for which Scott is probably to some extent responsible.

Though creative artists abandoned for most of the nineteenth century the initiative of Gray, scholarship did not; and the Celtic and Scandinavian strands in the European heritage were to re-emerge as sources of literary inspiration in the last quarter of the century.

As regards Celtic literature a tradition may be briefly traced. Between 1801 and 1807 the Myvyrian Archaiology of Jones, Williams (Iolo Morganwg), and Pugh, appeared. Lady Charlotte Guest produced her translation of the Mabinogion between 1838 and 1849. This was to inspire Tennyson's Marriage of Geraint and Enid and Geraint. Before Lady Guest's work appeared, Peacock had published in 1829 The Misfortunes of Elphin which was largely based upon his acquaintance with original Welsh sources. Taliesein plays an important role in the book, as he was to do in Charles Williams's Arthurian poems. Masefield's "Sailing of Bell Race" from Midsummer Night (1928) is based on the early Welsh fragment,

---

36. Ibid., p.70.

37. Dennis S.R. Welland, The Pre-Raphaelites in Literature and Art (London, 1953), p.32.

Proidden Arnoth.

On the older Irish literature and its influence on modern English writers it will perhaps be sufficient just to indicate the reawakening of interest about the year 1900. In 1893 Stopford Brooke wrote an essay entitled, The Need and Use of getting Irish Literature into the English Tongue. With the publication in 1902 and 1904 of Lady Gregory's Cuchulain of Muirthemne and Gods and Fighting Men respectively, this demand began to be met. W.B. Yeats in his earlier phase is probably the most famous name associated with Irish material in English poetry. However, mention should be made of Tennyson's Voyage of Maeldune based on F.W. Joyce's version of 1879 of an old Irish legend.

As for Old Norse, the classic instance is, of course, Morris's Sigurd the Volsung (1876), though Arnold's Balder Dead should not be forgotten. An indication of how widespread this interest in northern Europe had become may be gained from Hardy's Woodlanders. Where fifty years previously he would have apostrophised one of the Graeco-Roman pantheon, here Hardy several times refers to members of the Aesir. Jesse Joyce was indebted both to the Eddas and the Sagas, and is believed to have studied E.V. Gordon's Introduction to Old Norse. W.P. Ker did much to make the English-speaking public aware of Scandinavian literature, and R.W. Chambers has said that the "thing dearest of all to him was the study of what Scandinavia has contributed to the world."[30]

---

30. Quoted by Bernard Green, "W.P. Ker and the Teaching of Literature," The Golloge Courant, XX (Hartinmas 1968), 5.

Among Tennyson's works one finds indications that the interest in Anglo-Saxon language and literature, which was engaging so many scholars of the period, was percolating at last through to the literary scene. He made a verse translation of The Battle of Brunanburh. William Morris produced a version of Beowulf. This interest in Anglo-Saxon literature probably attracted most attention with Ezra Pound's Seafarer.

This body of literature, Welsh, Irish, Old Norse, and Anglo-Saxon, constitutes what C.S. Lewis in The Discarded Image has called the "barbarian legacy."[39] It was destined to ensure the continuance of a medieval tradition into the twentieth century. The chivalrous Middle Ages gave way to what was commonly termed the Dark Age. This is a return to the literature which had inspired Thomas Gray. Significantly, there is a definite relationship between the native force in the eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries. In 1867 Arnold's On the Study of Celtic Literature appeared. The emphasis is upon "natural magic" and Celtic melancholy; and while Arnold does succeed in isolating two of the most impressive features of Celtic literature, much of his concern appears to be to locate in English writings similar features. Arnold was perhaps engaging in a fascinating study of sensibility and affinity of imagination, along lines as much demanded by his own temperament as by his acquaintance with the Celtic imagination. To be fair to Arnold, he was not alone in his idea of what were distinctively Celtic qualities. C.S. Lewis complains of the medieval poets' way of treating their Celtic

---

39. Cambridge, 1964, p.6.

nonsense by saying "they have destroyed more magic than they ever invented."[40] Sir John Rhys in 1891 declared Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* to be the finest evocation of the Celtic spirit in modern English literature, and thereby implied it was also the highest reach of his genius.[41] That poem has been characterised by another nineteenth century critic as one which "quivers on the furthest verge of Dreamland to which some fancy can penetrate...."[42] This was the nineteenth century apprehension of the world of the Celtic past.

When one comes to Yeats's essay on *The Celtic Element in Literature*, he emphasises the qualities not so much of the Celtic, but of the primitive imagination in general. Arnold is still writing in the tradition of the early romantic conception of beauty - he is outside its circle but nostalgic for it, nostalgic for the faith the early romantics had in it and in the power of the imagination. Yeats is nostalgic for what is probably no more and no less real but which does tend to be more "mystical" - "the ancient religion of the world,"[43] and "the life beyond the world."[44] (One is piquantly reminded of Addison : "Our forefathers looked upon Nature with more reverence and horror, before the world was enlightened by learning and philosophy..."). To recover this "ancient

---

40. Lewis, *Allegory*, p.27. Italics mine.
41. *Studies in the Arthurian Legend* (Oxford, 1891), p.150.
42. From an anonymous review in *The Athenaeum* of April 5, 1850, reprinted by Weiland in *The Pre-Raphaelites*, p.176.
43. W.B. Yeats, "The Celtic Element in Literature," *Essays and Introductions* (London, 1961), p.176.
44. Yeats, p.184.

religion," Yeats believes, is the aim of art, and in this it is aided by the primitive imagination as found, for instance, in Celtic or Scandinavian legend. To trace the emergence of this reawakened need to return to the primitive to the fact that a

> reaction against the rationalism of the eighteenth century has mingled with a reaction against the materialism of the nineteenth century.... The arts by brooding upon their own intensity have become religious, and are seeking... to create a sacred book.[45]

This attitude connects Yeats with another tradition in modern English literature which, in fact, reverts to Blake - an interest in the Hermetics and the Christian Cabbalists. Though it was in the central Middle Ages that a knowledge of these first became diffused throughout western Europe, yet the modern world derives its knowledge of them principally from Renaissance or post-Renaissance sources.

Both the primitivist and the occultist has derived much raw material from the work of the anthropologist. Though an interest in other lands and peoples had been an important feature of the intellectual activity of the second half of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, it was the European Middle Ages which had captured the imagination of creative writers. With the turn of the century, it would seem as though "cultural primitivism" had at last taken the primacy from "chronological primitivism." Interest in one's European heritage ceased

---

45. Yeats, pp.186-187.

to be a hallmark of the age, but became instead an indication of a strong personal bias. Sir James Frazer's Golden Bough, with its very broadly based survey of primitive custom, has been quarried by writers in search of material. T.S. Eliot and James Joyce are two of those who have been particularly drawn to the Adonis, Attis, Osiris volumes. T.S. Eliot is also indebted to Jessie L. Weston's From Ritual to Romance for the themes of the Waste Land and the Chapel Perilous. Like Frazer, Dr. Weston's anthropological studies ranged widely in time and place.

In his earlier period T.S. Eliot's work reflects this movement among writers to study myth and the occult in order to find a basis for, and a mode expressive of, their metaphysical and religious aspirations. But in his later work he is representative of yet another trend in literature. The aesthetically motivated religious outlook of the Pre-Raphaelites and Decadents gave way to a strong reaction among certain writers in favour of an uncompromising insistence upon Christian dogma. This attitude is best summed up in these words of T.S. Hulme's :

> It is not... that I put up with the dogma for the sake of the sentiment, but that I may possibly swallow the sentiment for the sake of the dogma.[46]

Eliot himself was probably considerably influenced by the attitude of the Newman of The Grammar of Assent (1870). In the 1880's Roman Catholicism experienced what has subsequently been termed the "neoscholastic revival." This re-established the medieval Schoolmen as the basis of Catholic orthodoxy. Men, such as Frans Ehrle and Pierre Mandonnet,

---

46. Speculations (London, 1960 [first pub. 1924]), p.71.

successfully reinstated Aquinas as the chief interpreter of the Roman Church's theology. An inverted reflection of this is to be found in the work of James Joyce. Though T.S. Eliot is indebted to the tradition of Augustine and Aquinas, it is from Dante, a poet, and Julian of Norwich, a mystic, that he has derived some of his more penetrating insights. Julian of Norwich is the source of the following lines from Little Gidding :

> Sin is Behovely, but
> All shall be well, and
> All manner of thing shall be well.

This reliance upon one of the great medieval religious mystics is significant. Christopher Dawson has written of the Oxford Movement that "in its essential character" it was "a vindication of the supernatural character of Christianity - a supernatural order realized in the spiritual life of the individual Christian and in the corporate reality of a Divine Society."[47] Whereas Yeats turned first to Celtic myth and then created his own mythology, Eliot returned to the spirituality of the Middle Ages. He uses the Christian tradition which was shaped in that era to illuminate his own age. That past is both a consolation and an inspiration. It is no longer a world that offers such benefits to one tired of contemporary life : its benefits are supplied to enable one to cope with contemporary life and to aid others to do the same.

During this period a widespread revolution in the methods of historical scholarship was taking place. It is a critical commonplace that

---

47. The Spirit of the Oxford Movement (London, 1945), p.110.

"more than anyone else Scott was responsible for the historicization of the European consciousness...."[48] Scott made people aware of historical period, but it was in early nineteenth century Germany that the new critical approach to history evolved. A considerable period of time elapsed before the effects of this development were felt in the British literary world. Tennyson in his Dedication to his play Harold, in 1876, wrote:

> After old-world records -- such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou, -- Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest... [has] been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama.

Here Tennyson is trying to keep abreast of the latest in scholarship, but, before very long, Freeman's approach to history was to be completely superseded. Freeman represented those historians who relied almost exclusively upon chronicle sources in compiling their accounts. The value of record sources was just beginning to be fully appreciated in Britain. Much in this direction was accomplished by scholars interested in the history of institutions -- scholars such as Bishop Stubbs and F.W. Maitland. Because of this interest and the fact that the origins of most institutions had to be traced back through the Middle Ages to the Anglo-Saxon period, these were the ones which benefited initially from the advances in historiography. The twentieth century has done much to carry the story even further back and to open up the sub-Roman period. This development is reflected in literature also; and by 1947 Masefield, in his Badon Parchments, was able to present a picture of so nearly

48. Horace Poolman, "Historiography and The Ring and the Book," Victorian Poetry, VI (Autumn-Winter 1960), 250.

48. Horace Poolman, "Historiography and The Ring and the Book," Victorian Poetry, VI (Autumn-Winter 1960), 250.

historical as Arthur of Britain as is ever likely to be possible. During the last quarter of last century not only were the Middle Ages becoming more accurately known, but a wider range of interests was being taken into account. E.A. Freeman was a pioneer of historical geography, and J.R. Green did much to elucidate social and economic questions concerning the past. These studies provided writers with new tools; and, in especial, those who were following Sir Walter Scott in the tradition of the regional novel. It was not till the turn of the century that writers seemed properly to understand what Scott had had to teach them. About that time a new way of writing "historical" fiction began to evolve. Instead of recreating a period from the past, and deriving one's artistic power from the implicit contrast with the present of the author, the historical perspective was used to give a greater depth of significance to the present. This may be seen in such authors as Hardy and James Joyce and David Jones. As this sense of history as process has replaced that of history as static period, so the historical romance which was so important in the nineteenth century has ceased to be considered as serious literature, and has been relegated either to the sphere of popular fiction or that of children's books.

By and large, legendary material has suffered the same fate. However, one particular theme has carried over from the nineteenth century into the twentieth. This is the Grail theme from the Arthurian legend.[49] In the hands of writers such as John Cowper Powys and Arthur Machen it

---

49. See Reid, The Arthurian Legend, pp.262-265.

has continued to be the subject of serious literary endeavour. In 1915 Machen's The Great Return was published. He takes the Grail as a mystic symbol and attempts to show its power upon ordinary people living in the twentieth century. To some extent in the same tradition as Machen's novel is C.S. Lewis's That Hideous Strength which uses Arthurian material to symbolise spiritual forces in the twentieth century.

Finally, this century has also a continuation of William Morris's use of the Middle Ages as a vehicle for social ideas. G.K. Chesterton, with rollicking whimsicality, has tried to teach his age certain basic truths by referring to such impossible ideals as the universal mediaeval respect for the sacredness of a man's word. T.H. White's The Once and Future King also comes under this head. Perhaps even more significant than these has been the emphasis laid upon craftsmanship by Eric Gill, the sculptor, and his experiments in community life.

Many of the threads in the tangled history of mediaevalism which I have reviewed here, emerge as important factors in the work of David Jones and Charles Williams. The following chapters are an attempt to isolate such features in their writings, and to assess the relative importance of them in relation to their general approach to literature and life.

PART I: DAVID JONES

An interest in the Middle Ages is seldom an isolated feature of a writer's outlook on life, but is usually part of a general concern for the past of man. This is very evident in David Jones, and from a study of his works it is possible to discern what impulses encouraged his interest in the past, and to distinguish those propensities which directed him specifically to the medieval world.

An important factor is his disillusion with the present, and a consequent nostalgia for the past. In Anathemata opens with the celebration of mass at a moment roughly contemporary with the writing of the work, that is to say, "at the cagging end and end chapter's close"[1] of western European civilization. Nancy K. Sanders has described that passage as "perhaps the coldest lines that have been written in our time ..."[2] Towards the end of In Anathemata, the speaker says of the host as used in the mass:

> Failing
> (Sanctified?) Host
> your food, once. (Ana. 231)

David Jones is strongly conscious of the disintegration of the culture to which he belongs, and an important reason for his work is his desire

---

1. In Anathemata (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1952), p.49. References to this work will hereafter be given in the text in parentheses as Ana.

2. "The Inward Continuities," Agenda V (Spring-Summer 1967), 96.

to aid in spreading this process. Indeed, the purpose of The Anathemata is announced with T.S. Eliot's line at the end of The Waste Land : "These fragments I have shored against my ruins."

His dissatisfaction with the present is shown as early as the Preface to In Parenthesis.

> We who are of the same world of sense with Ruby and Fuzzy Wuzzy and who presume to other and more violent affiliation, are finding it difficult, as yet, to recognise those creatures of chemicals as true extensions of ourselves, that we may feel for them a native affection which alone can make them magical for us.[3]

The impersonality of a supremely technological era makes it difficult for David Jones to identify himself imaginatively with the many manufactured items which increasingly constitute the world in which he lives. His deep desire is to be "at one with that creaturely world inherited from our remote beginnings"; but he is forced to recognize that now one must "be attuned to very newfangled technicalities, compared to increasingly exacting mechanical devices; some fascinating and compelling, others sinister in the extreme; all requiring a new and strange direction of the mind, a new sensitivity, certainly, but at a considerable cost."[4] One is reminded of Malory's woeful indictment of the English nation : "And the moste party of all Englonde hylde with sir Mordred, for the people were so new-fangill."[5] It is

---

3. Preface to In Parenthesis (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1937), p.xiv.

4. Loc cit.

5. Sir Thomas Malory, Works, ed. Eugène Vinaver, Oxford Standard Authors (London, 1954), Book XXI, Chap. 1, p.668. Hereafter cited as Vinaver's Malory.

possible that both Malory and David Jones will be seen by posterity as the great masters of national elegy for their respective eras of transition. I should say that the element of nostalgia is much less prominent in In Parenthesis than in The Anathemata. The earlier work is more concerned to indicate what of value still survives despite the detrimental effect the changing environment has upon the expression of man's nature.

Since In Parenthesis "happens to be concerned with war",[6] it is not surprising that David Jones's attack on twentieth-century technocracy should be limited, in that work, to the modern type of warfare, which involves the destruction of many men through the agency of weapons unleashed from some invisible source. For example, there is the shell, the "mean chemist's contrivance, a stinking physicist's destroying toy,"[7] which startled John Ball in the middle of being lectured by Sergeant Snell.

By the time of the essay, "Art and Sacrament,"[8] David Jones's ideas had crystallized themselves into a coherent philosophy of the relationship of art to life. What he objects to is the purely utilitarian, or as he terms it, the "utile";[9] and what he commends is the "extra-utile,"[10]

---

6. Preface to In Parenthesis, p.xii.

7. In Parenthesis, p.24. References to this work will hereafter be given in the text in parentheses as In P.

8. See "Art and Sacrament" (1945) in Epoch and Artist : Selected Writings, ed. Herman Grisewood (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1959), pp.143-179. Hereafter all references to specific articles in this selection will be cited simply as Epoch and Artist.

9. Epoch and Artist, p.155 et passim.

10. Ibid., p.161.

that which subserves an end other than its immediate function. He goes so far as to say that "it is the inhumanitivity and gratuitousness in man's art that is the sign of man's uniqueness; not merely that he makes things, nor yet that these have beauty."[11] For David Jones, it is the instinct in man to create that is artistic that separates him from inanimate things and from the lower forms of life. The ultimate in this respect is man's consciousness of himself and all his works as having a supernatural as well as a mundane end. This develops into a profoundly religious, and, indeed, Christian way of interpreting life, which informs the argument of The Anathemata. What distresses David Jones is that the utilitarian appears to be dominant in the twentieth century, the "utile infiltration [is] nowhere held" (Ana. 50).

He believes this was not always the case; that there is a part to which man who cannot subscribe to this twentieth century "Philistinism" can resort for inspiration. In the course of the nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth, a phenomenon termed "The Break"[12] occurred in the development of western culture. The Preface to In Parenthesis expresses the situation typically as : "We feel a rubicon has been passed between striking with a hand weapon as men used to do and loosing poison from the sky as we do ourselves."[13] The Preface to The Anathemata states, "In the nineteenth century, Western Man moved across a rubicon which, if as unseen as the 38th Parallel, seems to have

---

11. Ibid., p.149.
12. Preface to The Anathemata, p.15.
13. Preface to In Parenthesis, p.xiv.

been as definitive as the Styx";[14] and the remainder of the Preface deals with problems similar to those raised in the "Art and Sacrament" essay. The text of The Anathemata itself in its opening pages describes the refinement of the mace as one "unscrolling that, the flanks are turned" (Ana. 30).

With this concept of "The Break" in mind, it is significant that while In Parenthesis is set in the twentieth century, and The Anathemata opens and closes with a contemporary scene, yet both works employ a considerable quantity of material which refers to the past. In the latter of the two works it is stated that "all connecting files [are] withdrawn or liquidated" (Ana. 30); that is to say, the continuity of western culture has been destroyed, and that the present phase is maintaining itself in isolation from its origins. The justification for David Jones's own work, he would claim, is his attempt thereby to restore the continuity of the cultural tradition, or, to borrow a figure of his own, to function as Bendigeidfran did, as a bridge, in this instance between a past era and the contemporary situation.[15] This theme will be more fully expanded in my fourth chapter when I come specifically to consider The Anathemata.

In his choice of a past to hold up before his own generation, as one that will restore their sense of the continuity of human development and give them a more foundation upon which to base the common

---

14. Preface to The Anathemata, pp.15-16.
15. See Epoch and Artist, pp.159-160, esp. p.160, n[1].

entexpriso of the present. David Jones has for the most part not only gone behind the Renaissance, but has also dwelt little on the High Middle Ages; he has returned to that period known as the Dark Age. He was probably much influenced by the opinions of one scholar in particular. Reading the list of acknowledgments in the Preface to The Anathemata is this tribute: "First, perhaps, I should mention Mr. Christopher Dawson to whose writings and conversations I feel especially indebted."[16] There are, for instance, two references in that work to this scholar's book, The Age of the Gods.[17] For The Anathemata, in fact, Christopher Dawson's views are almost essential for a proper understanding of the work. This later book of David Jones has a strongly religious centre in the liturgical tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. This, taken in conjunction with the following quotation from Dawson, is almost sufficient to account for the great number of medieval allusions to be found in it, taking "medieval" in the wide sense suggested in the Introduction to this study.

> If, as I believe, religion is the key of history, and it is impossible to understand a culture unless we understand its religious roots, then the Middle Ages are not a kind of waiting-room between two different worlds, but the age which made a new world, the world from which we come and to which in a sense we still belong.[18]

Dawson does not leave the matter there; for he further qualifies the

---

16. Preface to The Anathemata, p.36.
17. See The Anathemata, p.54, n[2]; p.65, n[1].
18. Dawson, Medieval Essays, p.1.

position by referring in the following terms to the Dark Age : "The whole medieval world is deeply rooted in this forgotten age, just as the modern world is deeply rooted in the middle ages...."[19] To the Dark Age is owed the process of amalgamation that welded Christianity, the legacy of the Roman Empire, and Classical learning, into a new culture and civilization. Christopher Dawson expresses it this way :

> If Europe owes its political existence to the Roman Empire and its spiritual unity to the Catholic Church, it is indebted for its intellectual culture to a third factor - the Classical Tradition - which is also one of the fundamental elements that have gone to the making of the European unity.[20]

On the basis of such a quotation one can readily appreciate how it was possible, and in fact, necessary for David Jones to extend his survey of western European origins in The Anathemata back into the Classical world. This is the reason for the high percentage of allusions to antiquity in a work which is actually based on the modern continuance of a rite which reached maturity in the Middle Ages. Christopher Dawson deals with the barbarian element, the fourth one in the growth of western Christendom, in chapter four of The Making of Europe. But this is a subject upon which David Jones had very pronounced views of his own. For him, the barbarian influx of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries was important, but not nearly so much so as the indigenous inhabitants of an island like Britain whose Celtic population antedated

---

19. Christopher Dawson, Preface of 1946 to The Making of Europe: An Introduction to the History of European Unity (London, 1932), p.vii.
20. Dawson, Making of Europe, p.30.

the Roman occupation, and survived it and all subsequent invasions, to persist on into the present era. This survival is very much at the centre of In Parenthesis, with which work I am now going to deal particularly.

David Jones is Welsh on the paternal side, and probably shares something of the nature of his ancestors. Anurin levis from In Parenthesis, "who worshipped his ancestors like a Christ" (In P. 155). Already in the twelfth century Giraldus Cambrensis had written that "the Welsh esteem noble birth and generous descent above all things... even the common people preserve their genealogies."[21] The practical explanation for this attitude is probably to be sought in the social structure of the people, in which they were organised into family and tribal units very much on the basis of ancestry; and in their legal system, where compensation for injury was both collected and distributed on a communal basis. An individual's share was calculated according to his degree of relationship to either the guilty or the injured party.[22] David Jones, himself, with reference to the Welsh concern for their ancestry provides an alternative explanation. "Neither in the twelfth nor in the twentieth century, is this, in essence, snobbism - it is rather a pathetic consciousness of past greatness in present meanness ..."[23] A characteristic which arose out of

---

21. Quoted by Jones, Epoch and Artists, p.217.

22. On the legal system see John E. Lloyd, A History of Wales, 3rd ed. (London, 1939), I, 284-285. Lloyd actually quotes, on page 285, the passage from Giraldus Cambrensis cited by Jones.

23. Epoch and Artists, pp.217-218.

a social need may have evolved to supply a psychological one. This seems to be the case with Aneirin Lewis, who reflects to himself that

> although Vatayn knew everything about the Heath Fifteen, and could sing "Gwyn Fach" to make the traverse ring, he might have been an Englishman when it came to matters near to Aneirin's heart. For Vatayn was innocent of his descent from Aeneas, was unaware of Geoffrey Arthur and his social histories, or Tra Thon Cetti for the matter of that - which pained his lance-corporal friend, for whom Troy still burned, and sleeping kings return, and wild men might yet stir from Newbury secession. (In P. 89).

Without attempting to elucidate these references at present, it should nevertheless be clear that the important point is that for Aneirin Lewis the legendary past of Wales is still vital.

David Jones takes this heritage of Welsh legend and uses it to characterise the specifically Welsh element among the British front-line fighters. In his Preface he writes :

> I would say something of the "welsh" element. Ladoly Worm, Emmenbuch, Fair Worcester City, Fair Maid of Kent : these, rightly, for our sins, discover a whole English complex; whereas the Dear Tryath, Eudon Hill, Troy Tovaunt, Men of the Hosts, will only find response in those who, by blood or inclination, feel a kinship with the more venerable culture in that hotch-potch which is ourselves. Yet that older element is integral to our tradition.[24]

For this reason the description of the death of Aneirin Lewis is significant in its use of references to one of the oldest Welsh tales.

---

24. Preface to In Parenthesis, p.xiii.

the story of Kulhwch ac Olwen. He

> ... saw Olwen-trefoils come moonlighted night
> on precarious slats of Fastubert,
> on narrow foothold on le Plentin marsh -
> more shewed he is to the bare bone than
> Ynyddodden Penkawr. (In P. 155)

Olwen was one of the most beautiful maidens of Welsh legend, so much so that "four white trefoils sprung up wherever she trod."[25] So steeped in this kind of literature was Anstein that he could not see trefoils (or some other diminutive flower) growing even under the most unromantic conditions and on a foreign soil, but that his imagination transformed the scene into one of beauty through association with a richer past. Writing on Malory, Jones makes the following comment, and I will quote it at length, as I believe it underlines that aspect of the literary imagination evidenced in Anstein, an aspect which is undeservingly deprecated today :

> ... Does this work not only gather recession from the past, but does it project itself forward so that other works of art and of nature, perhaps trivial, perhaps of only remote associations, are in our minds, conditioned by it, as this tree or bit of sky may evoke Constable or some other? Well, I think it can be said that this product of the late-gothic world, this very late medieval English translation from early medieval French material was, none the less, a creative work, and creative works tend to have a conditioning quality : hence things can seem Malorian.[26]

---

25. In Parenthesis, Part 7, N[4], on p.220. See also The Mabinogion, trans. Lady Charlotte Guest, Everyman's Library, 1906, p.120. Norreys often cited as Guest, Mabinogion.

26. Epoch and Artist, p.250.

like Anglia Levis, David Jones has also seen the circumstances of the years 1915 and 1916, through the medium of Lady Guest's Mabinogion; and this to a great extent accounts for the numerous allusions to that book in his own work. These references are not superimposed, they are rather the result of a highly sensitive imaginative vision.

The appositeness of the reference to Taplessdon Penkerr is dependent upon the explanation detailed above of the psyche of Anglia Levis, but its function is different from that of the Olwen allusion. The death of the giant is used as the archetype of all terrible deaths, and the point is that it has been outdone by the physical blasting that the Lance-corporal's body has undergone. Similar is the significance of the following sentence in the text: "Properly organised chemists can let ache more living power than ever Twrch Trwyth ..." (In P. 155). The famous boar from Kulhwch ac Olwen was notorious for the devastation it had caused while being pursued by Arthur and his followers. Once again a legendary figure is being used as the archetype of destruction. The fact, however, is that modern men simply doing their job (this is implied in the phrase, "Properly organised chemists") can encompass ends more terrible than even those legendary happenings long accepted as the ultimate.

The story of Kulhwch ac Olwen is part of an older stratum of peculiarly Welsh Arthurian tales. David Jones contrasts it favourably with the pseudo-historical account of Arthur which became prevalent in the twelfth century. Accounts such as that of "the magical boar-hunt ... by Arthur and the hosts of the whole Island, have an authenticity and

urgency altogether absent from the exploits in the Historia."[27] This is admittedly a point of view disqualified by a strong bias to Welsh but it gains in perspective when taken in conjunction with the following quotations, which, despite once more their inherent bias, do fairly accurately assess the position.

> I think it very relevant that we should appreciate how this Arthurianism had, by the time of Edward's victory over the Welsh, become a part of the inheritance of the English and the Welsh alike. But how very unlike, for the two nations, were the things evoked by that shared inheritance! [28]

> ... the tradition of Arthur (even when reintroduced in Angevin dirguises) was for the Welsh, an authentic part of their historical mythos, whereas for the English it was a literary convention mixed with locality-traditions as at Glastonbury and elsewhere.[29]

> But, whatever our predilections, the matière de Bretagne is, willy nilly, matter for us.[30]

In the Preface to *In Parenthesis* David Jones writes : "My non-persons in the war were mostly Londoners with an admixture of Welshmen, so that the mind and folk-life of those two differing racial groups are an essential ingredient to my theme."[31] He is anxious to represent both groups by their respective literary and legendary background. How

---

27. Ibid., p.226.
28. Ibid., p.224.
29. Ibid., p.227.
30. Ibid., p.232.
31. Preface to *In Parenthesis*, p.x.

he achieved this for the Welsh has already been indicated. Arthurian legend provided him with a means of characterizing the English element among his companions, for Malory was pre-eminently the English repositary of Arthuriana. But the Matter of Britain also afforded him a subtler advantage. Through its agency he could demonstrate the present unity of Welsh and English by emphasizing the common elements in their heritage. Yet even this might not prove a substantial enough basis to withstand the vicissitudes of war. As the Welsh was the older and more centrifugal of the two elements, the initiative would have to come from that quarter. So David Jones was forced to delve into the sub-Roman period of British history to substantiate the present structure of the island and accommodate his various companions in a composite inheritance.

> What makes the Arthurian thing important to the Welsh is that there is no other tradition at all equally common property of all the inhabitants of Britain (at all events of those south of the Antonine Wall), and the Welsh, however separatist by historical, racial and geographical accidents are devoted to the unity of this island.[32]

This concept of unity as far as the Welsh are concerned derives from "the Roman administration and idea"[33] which persisted after the troops withdrew in AD. 410.[34]

---

32. Enoch and Arthur, p.216.

33. Ibid., p.220.

34. See Lloyd, History of Wales, I, 101-102: "For Rome still exercised her majestic sway over the minds of the Britons, though she had ceased to command their obedience ... when it was possible, the new rulers [of sub-Roman Britain] were glad to establish a connection with the old order of things and to represent themselves as lawful successors of the former officials."

On the two lines from the old Welsh poem The Gododdin which he uses as the epigraph to Part I of In Parenthesis, David Jones has the following to say in a footnote :

> There seems an echo of the Empire in the lines I use for Part I :
>
> "Men marched, they kept equal step ....
> Men marched, they had been nurtured together."
>
> Perhaps he [the poet] had ancestral memories of the garrison at the Wall; of the changing guard of the helmeted Roman infantry .... [The poem] connects us with a very ancient unity and mingling of races; with the Island as a corporate inheritance, with the remembrance of Rome as a European unity.[35]

Behind these statements lies the authority of scholars such as J.E. Lloyd and R.G. Collingwood.[36] What David Jones wishes to make of them is this : that at one time the native Brythons had been assimilated to some extent by the civilisation of Rome; that this experience had bequeathed to them an ideal of co-operation in defence of a unified country; and that the texture of Roman culture which had most impressed itself upon the Celtic population of this Island

---

35. General Notes to In Parenthesis, p[4], on pp.191-192.

36. See Lloyd, History of Wales, I. 99-100; and R.G. Collingwood in Collingwood and Myres, Roman Britain and the English Settlements, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1937), pp.289-290. See also [Sir] John Rhys and David Brynmor-Jones, The Welsh People, 2nd & rev. ed. (London, 1900), p.110: "... Llywelyn ab Gruffudd proved to be the last of the line of Cunedda and Hoelgun to occupy the position of Prince of Wales, for as is well known the military successes and shrewd policy of Edward I achieved the substitution of the heir to the English crown for a native prince of the race of Hoelgun and Cunedda. Even thus the Prince of Wales of the present day is historically the actual representative of the Pax Britannica of Roman Britain; but his Roman Britain is Wales...."

was its military tradition. The era of the Romanised Brythons was brief, but it was their heroic age; that period which had produced Arthur, and had given them an honourable link with the Roman occupation, so that in the course of time they were able to adopt someone like the Emperor Maximus into their own traditions as Macsen Wledig.[37] Though the Welsh did not achieve a united Britain, the English did. Therefore, they also became inheritors of the Roman ideal, which the Welsh section of the combined peoples had kept alive. The latter had been accomplished not only through the persistence of Celtic traditions, but also because the English adopted Arthur, the dux bellorum,[38] as a hero peculiar to themselves. Thus there is nothing odd in David Jones implying that John Bull, for instance, should have ancestral memories of Rome. The history of this island is greater than the ethnic groups who have contributed to it, and the heritage of one becomes the inheritance of all. Towards the very end of In Parenthesis, the Roman military reputation is once more alluded to in order to enhance the part

---

37. See Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans. with intro. The Mabinogion, Everyman's Library, 1949, p.xx. They say of The Dream of Macsen Wledig: "... the story shows a strong and indeed nostalgic interest in the old Roman grandeur, and the (exaggerated) contribution to it of British fighting men."

38. Nennius, Historia Brittonum, Sec. 50. The relevant passage is quoted by [Sir] John Rhys, Preface to Le Morte d'Arthur, Everyman's Library, 1906, I. ix. For the case for Arthur's revival of the office of Dux Britanniarum see Collingwood, Roman Britain, pp.320-324. Collingwood wrote of Arthur that he was "the last of the Romans: the last to understand Roman ideas and use them for the good of the British people. The heritage of Rome lived on in many shapes; but of the men who created that heritage Arthur was the last, and the story of Roman Britain ends with him" (p.324).

being played by the British infantrymen.

> Oeth and Anoeth's hosts they were
> who in that night grew
> younger men
> younger striplings. (In P. 167)

The referent of these lines I take to be ambiguous. On the one hand they may refer to the reserves moving up, and to the successive batches of conscripted youths arriving at the front; or more probably, they refer to the way in which those who have been killed in the day's action grow, as it were, young again, not only through the place their self-sacrifice has secured for them in the memory of the nation, but also because they have finally escaped from time into eternity. The second interpretation is the more likely, since these lines are taken from a verse in Stanzas of the Graves,[39] which is a collection of englyns celebrative of the dead heroes of the Brythons. The point which is relevant to the present purpose is made in a footnote in which David Jones says: "Oeth and Anoeth's hosts occur in Welsh tradition as a mysterious body of troops that seem to have some affinity with the Legions."[40]

---

39. See In Parenthesis, Part 7 [47], on p.225. The translation given by [Sir] John Rhys in Y Cymmrodor, XVIII (1905), 130, is:
    Oeth and Anoeth's host were they, who at night
    Grew younger men, younger striplings:
    Whose them seeks let him Gwenas dig.

40. Ibid., Part 7, [47], on p.225. Jones refers one to The Iolo Mss. The relevant section tells how Caradoc, the son of Bran, defeated the Roman Emperor in the open plain after having severely harassed him previously by using guerilla tactics. Caradoc thereby proved that warfare was to him, "'Equal in the wild as in the open ground,' ... 'The same to him Oeth as Anoeth,' (open or concealed.)." See The Iolo Manuscripts: A Selection of Ancient Welsh Manuscripts collected by Edward Williams ("Iolo Morganwg"), with English trans. and notes by Taliesin Williams (ab Iolo) (Llandovery, 1848), pp. 597-600, esp. p.598.

The way in which David Jones succeeded in incorporating a set of allusions which could be used to associate Wolfman and Londonman together is an excellent example of his method of working. His reference, in order not to clash with his other allusions, had to have a medieval flavour, and it was a choice of genius which led him to the history plays of Shakespeare. Of the six references to them, four are to Henry V and two to Richard II. This choice of plays is consonant with the martial tone of the main narrative. The Henry V allusions are especially important. The first, the title to Part 2, "Chambers go off, corporals stay,"[41] is compounded of a stage direction and a remark made by Pyn. Its function is to indicate the nature of the following narrative section, in which John Ball's company begins to move forward to the front, after having attended for some time at lectures delivered by experts on various aspects of warfare. The sense of the title is that attendants leave the scene, while the fighting men remain. The fact that this interpretation is based on a misunderstanding of Shakespeare's text is unlikely to disturb many readers. According to C.T. Onions, A Shakespeare Glossary, in this instance "chamber" does not mean an attendant, but a "small piece of ordnance."[42]

The next allusion comes in Part 3, where it says: "Lance-Corporal Lewis sings where he will, yet in a low voice, because of the Majesty-Limen of the Vasa" (In P, 48).[43] In Act III, Scene ii, of Henry V,

---

41. Ibid., Part 2, N[1], on p.192.
42. 2nd ed. rev. (Oxford, 1958), s.v. "chamber."
43. See In Parenthesis, Part 3, N[24], on p.196.

variations of the phrase, "disciplines of the war," occur at least five times. It is the pet phrase of the Welsh Captain Fluellen, and there is humour in associating it with Lance-Corporal Aneirin Levis.

The third allusion occurs in Part 5, namely: "or when they relieve you in Ducke Hill, where his consecration is sufficient" (In F. 116).[44] David Jones is saying that the trench, "Ducke Hill," is in a sector where the enemy's earthworks are quite competent to withstand any British advance. On the other hand, Shakespeare's Fluellen is complaining that the English tunnels approaching the French position have been countermined by the enemy. The allusion, therefore, affords no precise parallel; it simply implies the fundamental human similarity between the contemporary situation and that obtaining in the Middle Ages.

The final allusion to Henry V occurs in Part 7 where it says that Aneirin Levis is asleep in "Arthur's lap" (In F. 155),[45] a euphemistic way of saying that he was killed in the action. The Shakespearian reference uses the phrase "Arthur's bosom" to indicate the death of Falstaff. The speaker is Mrs. Quickly. The introduction of Arthur's name serves as a link between this Shakespearian reference and the other decidedly Welsh allusions used in connection with Levis's death.

What is of paramount importance is that these four allusions refer to a group of characters in Shakespeare's play, composed of a Welshman and several ordinary London folk (presumably fifteenth century cockneys).

---

44. Ibid., Part 5, N^{24}, on p.215.
45. Ibid., Part 7, N^{4}, on p.220.

The situation in which John Bull finds himself is by no means unique in British history, especially in war-time.

The method David Jones uses to characterise the enemy is similar to that detailed above. In Part 4 he says that they

> Come from outlandish places,
> from beyond the world,
> from the Hexaynian - ... (In P. 67),

which designation then as German.[46] However, a few lines earlier he associates them with Odin, and in the notes he says that the "German field-grey" reminded him of "the grey wolf of Nordic literature."[47] Of course, Odin and Fenris are but the Scandinavian names for figures common to Teutonic mythology. When he later refers to a dead German as a "Hundtods-corpse" (In P. 102)[48] it is clear that the Scandinavian connection is deliberate. The reason is probably that the Norwegians and the Danes are intimately associated with the history of this island, and that The History of Howald Hundtods parallels the 1914-18 situation in that the inhabitants of Britain with their mixed background are fighting against a Teutonic invader. There is an echo of the description, given by the author of the History, of Howald's mail coat as being long

---

46. See S.O.E.D., 2nd. ed. rev. (Oxford, 1989), s.v. "Hexaynian."
47. In Parenthesis, Part 4, ll[26], on p.204.
48. Ibid., Part 7, ll[37], on p.223. At this point Jones seems to be referring to Eiling Monsen's translation of Heimskringla: The Lives of the Norse Kings (Cambridge, 1932), p.565.

and hanging in folds to the mid-calf, in these lines:

> long skirted field-grey to straight fold
> for a coat-armour... (In P. 182.)[49]

According to his own testimony the circumstances of the First World War produced in David Jones a preternatural sense of the past. "I suppose at no time did one so much live with a consciousness of the past, the very remote, and the more immediate and trivial past, both superficially and more subtly."[50] Yet his concern in writing is very much one for the present. He reflects that "it would be interesting to know how we shall ennoble our new media as we have already ennobled and made significant our old - candle-light, fire-light, dips, Wends and Swords, to choose at random."[51] The whole of In Parenthesis may be taken as an attempt to ennoble the facts of modern warfare. The method adopted by David Jones is not novel. He has consistently linked the new, the unfamiliar term, i.e. the 1914-18 War, with a term that already has venerable associations, whether it be literary, legendary, or historical. This in a sense constitutes a major distinguishing feature between In Parenthesis and The Anathemata. Whereas the former approaches the present by associating it with the past and thus giving to the present an additional dimension; the latter treats more decidedly of the past and attempts to show how it evolved into the present situation.

---

49. Cf. Monson, Notwithstanding, p.366: "His brynie was called Emma; it was so long that it stretched half-way down his legs and so strong that a weapon had never fastened on to it."

50. Preface to In Parenthesis, p.xi.

51. Ibid., p.xiv.

To read In Parenthesis is to be convinced of the effect made upon the author by the landscape which surrounded him during his spell in the trenches. This is one feature of the war which he sought to ennoble, to redeem. Here is a typical piece of description :

> The untilled squalor of the loveless scene spread for horizontally, staging unmeed discomfort, scrid and deprived as ill-kept hen-run that took on siddings on wet weekdays where wasteland meets environs and punctured bins come cannod-meats discarded, tyres to rot, derelict slow-weathered iron-ware disintegration between factory-end and nettle-bed. (In P. 75)

The title to this section is "King Pellam's Lande" (In P. 57).[52] His kingdom

> was in the realme of logris, and so befelle there grete pestilence, and grete hevne to bothe realmys; for there endured nother corne, ne grasse, nother well-ayo ne fruyte, ne in the watir was founde no fyssh. Wherefore men calle hit - the londys of the two maiden - the Waste Lande ....[53]

Though David Jones also utilises the religious and spiritual connotations of the concept of the Waste Land, at present it is sufficient to note the physical qualities. The region encompassing the trenches of both sides, of the Allies and of the Central Powers, evokes in David Jones by its sheer physical desolation memories of the legendary fate which overtook the realm of King Pellam with such devastating consequences. The scene in the midst of which David Jones lived was un-

---

52. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, M[1], on p.202.
53. Vinaver's Malory, Book XVII, Chap. 111, p.708.

doubtedly ugly, but to be able to associate it with a similar nothing which literary art had already endowed with a formal beauty, transfigured its harshness and lent it a vicarious appeal to the imagination.

There is another reference to Malory of this order which may be mentioned here. It occurs in Part 3 as John Ball's company passes through a barrier on its way to the front :

> Past the little gate,
> into the fold of upturned defences,
> into the burial-yard -
> the grinning and the guarding and the sore dreading - now now
> no any light in that place. (In P. 31)

Many of the phrases here are taken directly from Malory's description of Lancelot's approach to the Chapel Perilous.[54] But it was not Dr Weston's mistaken interpretation of that scene which was uppermost in David Jones's mind at the time of writing.[55] What concerns him is the peril-fraught atmosphere, and the calmness which Malory succeeded in generating; and which he himself wishes to transfer to his own work in order to convey to the reader something of the sensations felt by those new conscripts during this crucial experience.

---

54. See In Parenthesis, Part 3, 11^{20}, on p.194.

55. See Jessie L. Weston, "The Perilous Chapel," From Ritual to Romance (New York, 1957 [first publ. 1920]), Chap. xiii, esp. p.108. I do not deny that Dr. Weston's interpretation underlies Jones's usage in this passage - there is a definite sense in which his recruits are seen as initiates into some strange rite. But I do feel that the straightforward visual and atmospheric parallels are to the forefront of his mind.

Of a different type is another allusion to Malory later in Part 3. John Bell, having arrived at the trenches, now surveys the scene beyond.

> And to his immediate front, below the shelving scarp, a circular calm water greened the deep of a Johnson hole; centuries-pickot-iron half submerged, as dark excalibur, by perverse incantation twisted. (In P. 90)

The associations of the pick-iron with excalibur was probably suggested in the first instance by a purely visual similarity in the situation.

> So they rode tyll they cam to a lacke that was a feyre watir and brode. And in the myddis Arthure was ware of an arme clothed in whyght sarcyte, that holde a feyre swerde in that honde.[56]

But the allusion is charged with an ironic sense of the tragedy of the whole affair, which prompts the question : is it to this that the fabled sword of the Nether of Britain has descended?

A similar way of seeing the present through the medium of the past is attributed to Lance-Corporal Lewis who, as he viewed the water-logged plains of Flanders, "may be remembered Saithenin and the desolated marshes, the alarum fortified places, the great cry of the sea, above the sigh of Gwydno when his embankments above Aberystwyth (In P. 89). This alludes to the legend which arose around the submergence of a part of the north-west coast of Wales, known as Gwaelod y Gwaelod.[57]

This type of imaginative perception was not restricted to the landscape, but was also applicable to people. An excellent example occurs

---

56. Vinaver's Malory, Book I, Chap. xxv, p.41.

57. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, II[42], on p.211. See Lloyd, History of Wales, I, Note to Chap. I, §11, 25-26; and Rhys, Arthurian Legend, p.360.

in Part 3 where the scene and the inhabitants of it are both subsumed into memories of a legendary past. John Bull is on sentry duty :

> his near-mates sleeping like long-barrow sleepers, their dark name at rest.
> Spell-sleepers, thrown about anyhow under the night.
> And this one's bright brow turned against your boot leather, tranquil as a fox atthe sleepers, under fairy turnip, fair as Mabon sleeping. (In P. 51)

In his notes, David Jones writes : "It will be seen that the tumbled undulations and recesses, the static contexts, and the leaning axes that were the Forward Zone, called up easily" those recollections of antique tales.[58] The neolithic and bronze age barrows had obviously been a source of awe and mystery to the people who had succeeded their builders in the history of this country.[59] To explain these monuments of a remote past they associated them with the dwellings of otherworld peoples, and with the resting-places of heroes who, though temporarily withdrawn, were expected to return at some future stage. A similar process is at work in the mind of John Bull. Gazing at the "grey weal-of earth" (In P. 59) he transforms the excrescences on the landscape into barrow mounds; and his sleeping companions into an assembly of heroes, Arthur, Culhwch (literally "bright brow"), and their like.

Nevertheless, the allusion is ambivalent, because it not only provides a way of exalting John Bull's companions, but simultaneously it enforces the realism of the contemporary situation. This is the effect

---

58. Ibid., Part 3, F[36], on p.199.
59. See Lloyd, History of Wales, I, 10.

gained by the juxtaposition seen in the phrase : "And this one's bright brow turned against your boot leather ..." (In P. 51).

Already, with this last illustration about sleeping heroes, I have begun to anticipate the most significant method employed by David Jones to redeem the harsh, chaotic ordinariness of the war, namely, his attempt to parallel the world of 1914-18 with the heroic ethos of Europe in the "sap-years" (Ang. 49).

When David Jones embarked upon In Parenthesis his intention was deliberately to revive memories of the past. That the experience was painful he does not attempt to conceal, for he introduces his work with a quotation from Lady Guest's translation of Branwen the Daughter of Llyr.[1] This incident is as follows: Heilyn the son of Gwynn, one of seven who are keeping watch over the head of Bendigeid Vran in Gwales in Penvro, opens a door in the hall in which for the past eighty years they had been feasting. This action breaks the charm that had prevented them from feeling the sorrow they had sustained. Overwhelmed by their past misfortunes the companions cannot rest any longer, but continue their mission of transporting the head of Bran to London for burial. Despite the consequences, David Jones unlocks the door of his memories of the Great War, and his spirit, overcome with grief for those who suffered, urges him to achieve some memorial of their sacrifice.

This specific intention is testified to by the Dedication which states: "This writing is for my friends in mind of all the common and hidden men and of the secret princes and to the memory of those with me in the covert and in the open ...."[2] In this desire to celebrate the courage of the fighting men who had been his companions, David Jones is in direct line of descent from the ancient bards of Wales. He himself

1. See In Parenthesis, General Notes, II[3], on p.191; see also Guest, Mabinogion, p.47.

wrote in an essay :

> There is a key line in Aneirin's poem "Beid byt baeaut yr a gallen." The bards of the world appraise the men of valour. One could hardly put it more closely than that. The poetry of the "first bards" was concerned with a recalling and re-appreciation of the heroes in lyric form.[2]

For David Jones, as for the "first bards," "poetry is a song of deeds."[3] The dead deserve "a brilliant spirited melody"[4] to commemorate their feats of heroism, and it is a measure of the harsh impersonality of modern warfare, that Part 7 of In Parenthesis records the death of Aneirin Lewis, yet laments that there is "no anlaw to contrive his funerary song" (In P. 155). With this in mind, one can the better appreciate the relevance of the quotation from Lumber's Lament for the Makers which occurs in Part 4. It also was a celebratory roll-call of the glorious dead. This view of the poem was hidden from John Ball at the time of reading. Rather, he reflects that "one anthology is as bad as a library and there is no new thing under the sun" (In P. 95). He has, in the midst of the carnage of war, attempted temporarily to escape into the realms of poetry, and, having opened his Oxford Book of Verse at random (presumably), he is again confronted with the spectacle of human suffering and death. The reader has a different perspective from John Ball. Though he too would agree that "there is no new thing under the

---

2. Enoch and Arnold, pp. 57-58.
3. Ibid., p.140.
4. Professor Edward Anwyl, "The Book of Aneirin," The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1909-10, p.129.

sum," it is the similarity of purpose behind The Lament for the Heiress and In Parenthesis of which he is aware.

David Jones has written, "perhaps we are entering again upon a period when the love story may give place to the story of the heroic..."[5] His very definite predilection for the latter type of literature is another reason why he tended to pass lightly over the Middle Ages proper and to draw his inspiration from the great communal works of the Dark Age, before the tenets of "amour courtois" became prevalent.

The most renowned of all the ancient Welsh poems celebrating the men of action of the Celtic heroic age, is The Gododdin. This poem was quarried by David Jones to provide epigraphs for each of the sections of In Parenthesis. He used the translation made by Professor Anwyl to be found in The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1909-10.[6] It is important to realise that this is a carefully selected and edited translation; and though a tenuous narrative thread is distinguishable in this version, the originals on which it is based have an even slighter element of story. H.M. Chadwick in his Heroic Age placed The Gododdin in Stage I of the development of heroic poetry, that is, he treated it as mainly lyrical and celebrative without any fully developed narrative content.[7] The following skeleton sequence of events may be placed together. An attack was made upon the Anglo

---

5. Epoch and Artist, p.240.
6. Anwyl, T.H.S.C., 1909-10, pp.120-136.
7. Cambridge, 1912, p.109. See also Gwyn Williams, An Introduction to Welsh Poetry : From the Beginnings to the Sixteenth Century (London, 1953), p.24.

of Bernicia and Deira at a place called Catraeth (now Catterick in Yorkshire) by a body of three hundred crack troops who had been nobly entertained for a year by Mynyddawg Mynwawr in lieu of their subsequent service. They encounter an overwhelmingly superior force of Angles and in the battle are wiped out but for one survivor, namely the poet.[8]

Quite the opposite of the Gododdin poet, David Jones in writing In Parenthesis gave to his work a firm narrative basis. In order to fit quotations from The Gododdin into the sequence of events which he was describing he had to allow himself considerable licence in the composition of the epigraphs. Thus to Part 1 :

> Men marched, they kept equal step ...
> Men marshed, they had been nurtured together,

is taken from pages 121 and 122 of Anwyl's version. As these lines occur in The Gododdin, they obviously refer to a stage preliminary to the actual combat. This does not parallel their usage in In Parenthesis. Here they are descriptive of the movement of the battalion from the parade ground to the point of embarkation. The second epigraph occurs on page 129 of Anwyl's translation. The reference is to the preparations made by the troops on the Tuesday and Wednesday respectively, for the day's encounter. For David Jones these two lines :

> On Tuesday they put on[9] their dark blue raiment;
> On Wednesday they prepared their enamelled shields,

---

8. Another version gives the number of troops as three hundred and sixty three, and of survivors as three, in addition to the poet himself. See Kenneth H. Jackson, The Gododdin: The Oldest Scottish Poem (Edinburgh, 1969), pp.4-5.

9. Anwyl has "donned."

refer to the training programme undergone by the new recruits before they were moved forward to the front. For the third epigraph David Jones turns back to page 120 of Amyl, and the quotation :

> Men went to Catraeth, Sunday with Laughter,
> The old,[10] the young, the strong,[10] the weak,

in a generalised picture in respect of both works. Part 3 does introduce the reader more intimately to some of John Bull's companions, for example, Ancient Lewis and "old Adams" (In P. 55). The epigraph to Part 4 is :

> Like an hoop-eared animal in a quiet nook, before his day
> came ... before entering into the prison of earth ... around
> the contour, active and defensive, around the fort, around
> the steep-piled rods.

This is fabricated out of disparate materials to be found on pages 126 and 127 of Amyl. The "hoop-eared animal" is presumably to be applied to John Bull as a representative infantryman, straight from civilian life in Britain; "the prison of earth" is descriptive of the attitude the soldiers must often have entertained towards their trenches; while the final group of phrases would almost appear to have been written with a knowledge of trench warfare conditions.

With Part 5, the first serious dislocation of the Gododdin narrative is encountered. The quotation occurs on page 135 of Amyl, and refers to the period when the three hundred were nobly entertained by Mynyddawg before the expedition took place. For David Jones, "He has brought us

---

10. Amyl has "and".

to a bright fire and to a white fresh floor-hide," is indicative of the easier conditions enjoyed by John Bull and his companions while being moved south from the Flanders front for the same offensive. For instance, Jones writes: "They billeted men that night, in plentiful hay, freshly carried; you could lie, with exquisite contentment, and listen to the war" (In P. 116). Though this epigraph is not even in approximate sequence with the preceding ones, still in the context of Jones's whole work it does not clash as it is preliminary to the final encounter in Mametz wood which must parallel the actual battle of Gethsemane itself.

> Men went to Catraeth as they dressed: their fears
> disturbed their peace.
> Men went to Catraeth: face of speech and their
> host ... death's one meeting place, the goal of
> their marching. (In P. 139).

These lines completing the epigraph to Part 6 occur on page 120 of Anwyl's translation. In David Jones's scheme they are indicative of the final preparations for the attack on Mametz wood; and thus logically follow upon the events typified by the preceding epigraph. The final one is perhaps the most interesting of them all. It is taken from pages 132 and 120 respectively of Anwyl:

> Gododdin I demand thy support.
> It is our duty to sing: a meeting
> place has been found.

The "meeting place" is the only reference to the encounter described in the succeeding pages. The greater part of the quotation is being used

as an exhortation to the reader, reminding him as an inhabitant of Britain (for which "Gododdin" here stands) of his duty to honour those who gave up their lives in the 1914-18 War.

Because The Gododdin was composed as a series of short elegies,[11] and Professor Anwyl has regrouped these according to principles of his own, the page references to his translation give no indication of the place of occurrence of any quotation in the narrative sequence. I have given the pagination to demonstrate more effectively the care David Jones has lavished on the selection of the dozen or so lines which he has used.

The foregoing detailed consideration of these epigraphs has not yet touched upon their chief significance, which is the heroic dimension they add to David Jones's narrative. Introducing each section of his work is a carefully chosen quotation from the most famous heroic poem of the Welsh people. These excerpts have been deliberately paralleled with the modern action described in the body of the text. The result is to associate the activities of John Ball and his companions with those of the three hundred at Catraeth. Before the reader plunges into the realism and brutal ordinariness of trench warfare, he is made aware of a period which had already managed to elevate, through the power of the human spirit involved, similar situations; and he is now conscious that a relationship between that age and the one being described is being posited by the writer.

---

11. See Anwyl, T.H.S.C., 1909-10, p.117.

Professor Amyr's translation several times uses the word "princes"[12] of the three hundred who went to Catraeth. E.H. Jackson has recently shown that they were in all probability noblemen.[13] It is all the more significant, therefore, when David Jones uses the term in his Dedication with application to the privates of the Great War. He is suggesting that no matter what appearances there are to the contrary, by their self-sacrifice that is in fact the style of address they have earned.

In the course of the text three other references are made to The Gododdin. "They labour with the bulging gabions, they ladle and rattle like lveta, they are families with the path of a water-course..." (In P. 88). This passage occurs in Part 4 and describes the attempt made by the troops to cope with the water-logged conditions obtaining in the trenches. There is nothing heroic in such a setting. But a footnote[14] refers the reader to a quotation from page 151 of Amyr, and thereby associates the tedious drudgery of the ordinary soldier with the dashing bravery of the hero Eveth. In Part 7 the connection between John Ball and his companions with the heroes of The Gododdin is finally made explicit when it says that the shell-fire had rendered Aneirin Lewis "unwhole, limb from limb, then any of them fallen at Catraeth" (In P.159).[15] Such is the holocaust of modern war. Finally, there is another reference

---

12. Amyr, pp.128, 130, 135.
13. Jackson, The Gododdin, pp.14-15.
14. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, ff[42], on p.211.
15. Ibid., Part 7, ff[4], on p.220.

to The Gododdin in Part 4.

> Gone with Merlin in his madness, for the pity of it; for
> the young men reaped like green barley,
> for the folly of it. (In P. 66)

Basically, this allusion is to the Vita Merlini account of Merlin's madness as summarized in Jones's footnote.[16] It is primarily of interest as an example of the way in which David Jones dovetails his numerous literary references. The slaughter at the battle of Arderydd is associated with the slaughter at Catraeth which has already been related to the First World War, and the madness of Merlin becomes representative of every sensitive reaction to the sheer human wastage of war.

On the title page of the whole book there is a quotation from The Gododdin which Jones translates as : "His sword rang in madness' hands."[17] Speaking of this line, Professor Ameyl says : "The Gododdin [sic] ... shows throughout ... the influence of conceptions of humanity which have a singularly modern ring ...."[18] It is necessary to stress the weight which must be given to Jones's literary allusions as frequently the pathos, if not indeed the tragedy, of the situation, is only brought out through their medium.

Having used The Gododdin to indicate the narrative pattern of his work and to establish its heroic tenor, David Jones proceeds to elaborate

---

16. Ibid., Part 4, N[12], on p.204.
17. Ibid., General Notes, N[4], on p.191.
18. Ameyl, T.H.S.C., 1909-10, p.119.

upon this by drawing widely on the older literature of the Welsh nation. A simple instance of this is the way he describes "old Adams" who had outlasted over the age limit and who "already regrets his sixty-two years. His rifle-butt is a third foot for him, all three supports are used for him, as child the floor strikes up, so this child creeps to mock his bogus 'lasting age'" (In P. 52-53). The treatment is humanly humorous. There is something pathetically noble in this fine old man attempting to masquerade as a bold youngster. "His rifle-butt is a third foot for him," parodies a line from the Hir Eryri (Mountain Snow) section of Stanzas, namely, "A third foot to the aged is his staff."[19] How incongruous is the situation, a travesty of old age and of war alike. Yet, while this old soldier's quasi-legendary counterpart, Llywarch Hên, eased his sense of uselessness with and reflections upon life, the former is struggling, not unsuccessfully, to give the lie to his age.

Reference has already been made to Jones's use of the bow Trwch Tryfyth as an archetype of destructive energy. There is a passage in Part 4 where the hunt of the boar is clearly used as a description of the effect of shelling on a part of the trenches.

> They say that when the Boar Tryfyth broke the land, by Eagles Carval, with a fifth part of Ireland, who in his going by destroyed indifferently, men and animals, and the King's son there, Kneagwyn who was good for no one, got off without a scratch, to come safe home again. (In P. 86)

---

19. See In Parenthesis, Part 3, ll[43], on p.201. See also William F. Stone, The Four Ancient Books of Wales (Edinburgh, 1868), I. 389.

The relevant passages from Lady Guest's translation are :

> And Arthur went as far as Region Ossyal in Ireland, to the place where the Boar Twrch was with his seven young pigs .... The next day it was told to Arthur that they had gone by, and he overtook them as they were killing the cattle of Kynnwas Kwrr y Vagyl, having slain all that were at Aber Gleddyf, of men and beast, before the coming of Arthur .... And he slew ... three attendants upon Glewlwyd Gavaelvawr, so that Heaven knows he had not an attendant remaining, excepting only Llaesgovyn, a man from whom no one ever derived any good.[20]

The "Boar Twrch" stands for the bombardment which destroys soldiers and transport animals indiscriminately; Llaesgovyn is some soldier of poor personal calibre whose only claim to distinction is in his birth, and yet who has survived the onslaught. The passage continues to parallel the story as given in The Mabinogion. In the latter Kaw is a character with the power to transform himself into a bird. He spies upon the boar, but when he tackles it, he is injured by poison from its breath so that "he was never well from that day forward."[21] David Jones's two "auxiliaries" of whom "you couldn't find a rag" are the Keawed and Oala Lyllelkvaw of Kulhwch who were drowned (or, at least, nearly so) when attempting to grapple with the boar as it swam the Severn.[22] The complete passage allowed the author to catalogue the incident and the personnel involved in it according to type. Thus the

---

20. Guest, Mabinogion, pp.130, 131-132.

21. Guest, p.129.

22. Guest, pp.133-134. I said that they were nearly drowned because Keawed appears alive and fit in a subsequent incident, just a couple of paragraphs further on.

use of the bone-hunt as a myth for a bombardment both diminished and universalised the event. However, the full effect of the scene is only realised in the final lines : " - in the tenuloned silence afterwards you couldn't find a way of them - only someone complaining under a broken revolving-crane" (In P. 86). Whatever one may have begun to think, this is no myth : this is the horror of human agony.

Part 3 contains the most impressive piece of sustained imagery drawn from Welsh literature. The scene takes place at night with John Bull on sentry duty, looking across no-man's-land to the enemy trenches. His sense of cold and evil is enforced through images drawn from the traditions of the Welsh Otherworld. For instance, as he is listening intently for the sound of any suspicious movement he imagines he hears the Dogs of Annwn (Hell) barking as they fly through the cold night air. Momentarily, he is back with a nineteenth century peasant survival of an ancient superstition.[23] The Welsh source at this point changes to one of the very oldest of Arthurian poems, one which considerably antedates the popular medieval romances. In it Arthur, a semi-mythical figure, carries out a raid on Annwn or Hades. The poem describes Annwn as a "Glass Fort"; and "before the door of Hell's gate lamps were burning." This fuses with the vision John Bull has of the enemy trenches that night :

> His lamps hang in this black cold and hang so still; with this still rain slow-moving vapours wreathe to refract their clear ray - like through glassy walls that slowly turn they rise and

---

23. See In Parenthesis, Part 3, n[30], on p.199. See Gwent, Mabinogion, p.269.

> Creature - for this fog-smoke wraith they cast a dismal chorm. (In P. 32)

As the complete passage has already been fully annotated by the author[24] there is no need to give a detailed analysis of it. However, this much must be said. The sensory qualities of the scene are what seem first to have fired John Bull's imagination. He was aware of the dark, the cold, and the hazy light from across the distance. The physical circumstances evoked memories of legend which thereafter characterized the scene. This vision of present and past, as transparency upon transparency, produces for the reader not only a profound and powerful sense of atmosphere, but an uncanny awareness of the hidden depths belonging to relatively straightforward situations. Sentry duty at night has acquired the perspective of primeval memories.

The foregoing illustrations do not add materially to the heroic concept David Jones derived from The Gododdin. Their function is primarily to expand upon the other allusions, to enable the parallel with the past to pervade as much of the work as is necessary to produce a basic consistency of tone.

Following upon the Preiddeu Annwn or The Harrying of Hades section comes a number of references to Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry. The point of this passage is not to ennoble the present by associating it with an honourable past, but to underline the contemporary conditions through emphasizing the gulf between them and the heroic world. Despite con-

---

24. Ibid., Part 3, N[42], on pp.200-201. See also Rhys, Preface to Le Morte d'Arthur, pp.xx-xxiii.

stant attempts to lend significance to the routine suffering, to redeem the unthinking drudgery of a "stationary war" (In F. 91), where there seems to be no opportunity for any individual valour, nevertheless there is no escape from the fact that trench warfare is a sordid, inglorious affair compared with the exploits recorded in literature and legend. Indeed, the heroic ethos seems far from the like-minded marshlands of Flanders. Men have strangely dwindled from pristine stature. With innate artistic skill David Jones recognises that without realism to balance the picture, his attempts to present a heightened view of the action and to see beyond its exterior would lack credibility. It should be remembered that what this passage primarily cautions against is the confusion of certain literary ideals with the reality of the 1914-18 War.

A regular figure in Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry was the association of certain birds and animals such as eagles, ravens, and wolves, with battle scenes. Based on fact, this became a stylistic convention. By the time of the 1914-18 War the facts had changed. The eagle has become the rat. Like man, himself, it has dwindled from its heroic stature. The birds "suffer with us this metamorphosis." They

> have naturally selected to be un-winged;
> to go on the belly, to
> sap sap sap
> with fastened spines, arched under the moon; furnit with
> whiskered snouts the secret parts of us. (In P. 54)

The putrefaction, the obscenity, have a grim humour imparted to them by the phrase "furnit with whiskered snouts." "Fur", "whiskers", and

"mouth" usually connote something pleasant. Collocations may be easily supplied from the realm of pets, for example, dogs and cats. That man should be forced to be on such terms of familiarity with scavengers of offal is the opposite of any heroic ideal. The humour becomes less grim as the focus sharpens on the ordinary infantryman who has to take this in his stride and make the best of it :

> Your body like the service of the boy in the most comfortable fashion imaginable.
>
> It's mucky enough. (In P. 95)

In a footnote to this passage, David Jones alludes to The Battle of Brunanburh.[25] According to the late K.M. Chadwick, this poem is representative of a martial type of verse. While sharing many of the characteristics of heroic poetry, it is less universal, more distinctly nationalistic, in its portrayal of patriotism. The Goddodin is more interested in individuals than in nations.[26] In Parenthesis, coming as it were, at the end of the evolution of heroic poetry, is able to draw upon the various phases of its development as the basis for its own peculiar synthesis. The theme of nationalism becomes clearer on consideration of those references made in the text to Welsh history.

The final encounter in Mametz Wood is associated with the battle of Camlann that destroyed the political, moral and spiritual experiment of King Arthur in Logres. The connection is made when it says that Amirin Lewis was more carefully disfigured in death than any who fell

---

25. Ibid., Part 3, N[47], p.202.
26. Chadwick, Heroic Age, pp.332, 335-336.

"on the seabeard-dom, by Salisbury" (In P. 155).[27] In itself, this is an example of the medieval figure, the "tropos of overgoing." Camlann equates with disaster, and this seems offensive is more terrible than the conventional tragic exemplum. This was not the first time that a great disaster had been compared with Arthur's last battle. The thirteenth century Welsh poet, Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch, had written that at the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd there arose "many a piteous cry, as once at Camlan."[28] Memories of Llywelyn form a part of the reverse of Anoirin Levis in Part 4.[29] For him, as a Welshman, there was only one historical event in any way comparable with the tragedy involved in the Great War, and that was the untimely death in a skirmish, one December day, of the last Prince of an independent Wales. He thought of him "who will not come again from his reconnaissance - they've scorched his breeches well, they've given him an ivy crown - oh Iyw olef - whose wounds they do bleed by day and by night in December wood" (In P. 89). Ancestral memories, as well as literary conventions, link this event to the last battle of King Arthur. For, at the latter, the hope and saviour of the Romano-British people fell. From that time onwards the Celtic inhabitants of this island had been on the retreat. Still, they were conscious that they through their ancestry, maintained an unbroken link with the traditions

---

27. See In Parenthesis, Part 7, N[4], on p.220.

28. Cerys Williams, trans. "The Death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd," by Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch in The Burning Tree: Poems from the First Thousand Years of Welsh Verse (London, 1956), p.63. Cf. Breuddwyd and Arddlad, p.226.

29. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, N[42], on pp.211-212.

of Rome. As Sir John Rhys once expressed it :

> Llywelyn and his brothers were the representatives of one of the very oldest reigning families of western Europe - one that could trace its origin to the time when Britain still formed part of the Roman Empire, and which had with some brief intervals ruled in Gwynedd for nearly nine hundred years.[30]

In Part 7 the memory of the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd is again revived. "Red Cross-coat" (In P. 186), a Welshman like Andrew Lewis, and as keen on his Welsh background as the other, is missing (presumably blown to pieces) when the "Queen of the Woods" (In P. 185), a personification of natural woodland countryside, goes among the dead, giving to each a flower. She had especially wanted to honour Dai, for "Among this lily nobleness she is mindful of December wood - when the trees of the forest beat against each other because of him" (In P. 186). The allusion is to several lines of the elegy on Llywelyn of which David Jones gives this translation : "The voice of lamentation is heard in every place.... the course of nature is changed... the trees of the forest furiously rush against each other."[31] It is not merely accident, I feel, but a genuine indication of an affinity of sensibility, that in one of the most moving parts of his novel, The Woodlanders, Hardy should parallel human suffering with the way the branches of trees in a storm worry one another into wounds.[32]

---

30. Rhys, Welsh People, p.342.

31. See In Parenthesis, Part 7, ll.[44], on p.224, which refers one to Part 4, ll.[42], on p.212.

32. See Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders (first publ. 1887), Chap. xlii.

Part 3 provides a good example of the way David Jones was able to combine references to Welsh history with his more general heroic framework :

> The white-tailed eagle at the battle ebb,
> where the sea were against the river...
> (In P. 54).

are the lines in point. The first refers to "the grey-coated eagle, white-tailed" of Ecgmonbrith.[33] At the close of any battle the birds of prey flocked to the field to feed on carrion. The second line refers to the fact that the sons of Llywelyn the Great were buried near the estuary at Aberconwy.[34] The connection between the two allusions is made by the metaphor "battle ebb" which naturally leads into the figurative description of the mouth of the River Conwy. The total effect is to underline the involvement of nature in the tumult of human conflict.

To turn now to The Battle of Maldon, referred to in Jones's lines, "the speckled kite of Maldon" (In P. 54). It has been used as a model of the total structure of In Parenthesis. John H. Johnston in an article entitled, "David Jones: The Heroic Vision," puts the case thus :

> As Maldon stops short with the deaths of the East Saxons so also In Parenthesis stops short with the deaths of John Ball's comrades and the wounding of Ball himself.[35]

This is perfectly valid, but there is a much closer parallel included

---

33. The Battle of Ecgmonbrith, trans. E.E. Gordon, Anglo-Saxon Poetry, Everyman's Library, 1926, p.360.
34. See In Parenthesis, Part 3, ll[47], on p.202.
35. The Review of Politics, xxiv (January 1962), 72-73.

in the text itself, namely, The Song of Roland. Part 7, towards its close, contains a passage in which the wounded John Ball debates with himself as to whether he ought to leave his rifle behind as it is impeding his retreat. Any reader of Beowulf knows the value which was set upon a sword, and the way in which it might be handed down as a treasured heirloom from one generation to the next. The inner conflict of John Ball is related to the account given in The Song of Roland of how the hero there contrived to prevent his sword from falling into the hands of the enemy. The confliction of the two characters, Roland and John Ball, is such that it is hard to distinguish whether one or the other, whether sword or rifle, is being mentioned:

> It is not to be broken on the brown stone under the gracious tree.
>
> It is not to be hidden under your falling body.
>
> Sling on, it troubles your painful crawling like a fugitive's irons. (In P. 104).

The first two sentences are adapted from The Song[36] the last is concerned with John Ball's rifle. The Great War infantryman is, on the last analysis, no Roland. He does abandon his rifle, though his whole training has been to inculcate in him a supreme regard for its care and protection. Yet, there is something remarkable in that even momentarily he has been associated with such a hero.

The Song is in two narrative sections. The first concludes with this incident involving Roland's effort to protect his sword even in death.

---

36. See In Parenthesis, Part 7, ll[42], on p.224. See René Hague, trans. The Song of Roland (London, 1937), Sects. 168-176, pp.80-85.

David Jones makes no precise reference to any later event. The poem, however, does continue with the account of Charlemagne's subsequent victory. Even before Roland dies, the reader knows that Charlemagne has already heard his horn, that he is coming to succour the latter, and that the ultimate defeat of the forces of Islam is almost inevitable. This affords a much closer parallel to the actuality of 1916 than Malory where all that is to follow is defeat, however heroic. Thus it is that on the last page of In Parenthesis occur the lines :

> The feet of the reserves going up tread level with your foreheads; and no word for you; they whisper one with another;
> pass on, inward;
> these latest recruits ;
> green Kimmeridge to bear up the war. (In P. 167)

Still, the emphasis of the whole work is on the fate of John Ball and his comrades, so that it is fitting that it should conclude with a quotation from near the end of the first part of The Song : "The poets says this, and the man who was on the field ..." (In P. 167).[37] This, in turn, links up with The Gododdin, as it is in John Ball, like Aneirin the poet, who survives to tell the tale.

The theme of Christian references which greatly enhances the significance of Jones's web of allusions, is not my present concern. Nevertheless, it should be noted that The Song of Roland is an example of what

---

37. Ibid., Part 7, ii[49], on p.225. See Hague, The Song, Sec. 155, p.75.

Christopher Dawson has termed "Christian Epic."

> He [Roland] turned his head towards the pagan people, and he has done this because he would have Charles and all his people say, "The gentle count, he died undefeated." He confesses his sins feebly and often. He raised his glove to God in offering for his sins.[38]

Dawson explains this literary phenomenon as the result of "a spontaneous attempt to find a Christian outlet for the unlimited aggressiveness of a primitive warrior ethos which could not be expunged internally without tearing society to pieces."[39] "In the earliest and the greatest Chanson the dominant motive is not revenge or private feud but the nobler theme of the war of the Franks against the infidel - geste Dei per Francos."[40] David Jones who has already incorporated the ideas of the sixth century Gododdin, of the tenth century Dream-lyrh, and now of the twelfth century Song of Roland, finally transcends even the spiritual idealism of the last named work, and restores the timeless and unchanging ethos of true Christian love.

C.S. Lewis has said that Christian "love" is less a matter of liking a person, as of having the will to give them the same consideration which one instinctively accords oneself.[41] This involves a great deal of understanding and compassion, and these qualities are evinced by

---

38. Hugo, The Song, Sec. 174.

39. Dawson, "The Christian Epic," in Medieval Essays, p.207.

40. Dawson, p.200.

41. See C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, Fontana Books, 1955, p.113. Christian love "is not a statement of the feelings but of the will; that state of the will which we have naturally about ourselves, and must learn to have about other people."

David Jones even towards the Germans. He attempts to penetrate the artificial hatred which war necessarily engenders, and to appreciate how similar to his own are the hopes, fears, prayers and curses of the foe :

> But all the old women in Devenish are busy with their novenas, you bet your life, and don't sleep lest the watch should fail, now weave for the wire might help his dodging feet and the dead Kerl might not come home.
>
> Now still the pitcher at the well - he told Jean how slippery it was out there.
>
> O clemens, O pia and
>
> burn all out of sight the English guns soon. (In P. 149)

In Parenthesis, in fact, is dedicated both to the British soldiers and "to the enemy front-fighters who shared our pains against whom we found ourselves by misadventure." In Part 7, when the "Queen of the Woods" is distributing her favours :

> For Balder she reaches high to fetch him.
> Ulrich smiles for his myrtle wand.
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> Honour with Granny share dog-violets for a pain, where they lie in serious embrace beneath the twisted tripod. (In P. 185).

Nature does not discriminate between friend and foe; and the irony that casts a Welshman across a German in death speaks of a truth to which the living are all too often blind. One of the most moving passages in The Anathemata is that in which David Jones describes the unofficial truce between the front-line troops on Christmas Day, 1915 :

> ... and later, on this same morning certain of the footmen of Britain, walking in daylight, upright, through the lanes of

> the war-mat to outside and beyond the muted trip-bolt, some with gifts, none with pared weapons, embraced him between his knees and ours, overhanging tokens. (Ann. 216).

This Christian reorientation which he gives to his heroic theme, reminds one forcefully of The Dream of the Rood. In that poem Jesus is described in the conventional terms applicable to a warrior, but the deed so celebrated is far from conventional. His heroism is not that of war, but of passive suffering. The crucial lines of the poem conveying this sense must have deeply impressed David Jones as he made an inscription of them. A photograph of this is to be found facing page 240 of The Anathemata.

Contrasting with his use of The Song of Roland, David Jones has not emphasized the religious significance of Malory's La Morte d'Arthur. Part 4 is introduced by a quotation from the Grail adventure of Sir Launcelot : "So thus he sorrowed till it was day and heard the fowles sing, then somewhat he was comforted" (In P.59.)[42] That knight, in a state of drowsiness, has seen a man who was sick, healed through the agency of the Sankgreall. Though the latter was the object of his quest, he was quite incapable of effective action. On waking fully, he laments, "now I se and understonde that myne olde synne hyndryth me and shewyth me, that I had no power to stirre nother speke when the holy blood appared before me."[43] In this mood he continues till day-

---

42. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, ii[2], on p.202.
43. Vinaver's Malory, Book XIII, Chap. xix, p.654.

breaks. The basic reason for the quotation appearing in In Parenthesis is that it aptly covers the period between the end of Part 3, and the opening of Part 4, between the first night and the first morning in the trenches. Moreover, it is an additional reminder of the extent of another section of the world of heroic warfare with which the incidents of 1915 to 1916 are being compared throughout. Yet, another level of meaning is to be found in the fact that whereas Lancelot was guilty, John Ball and his companions are to all intents and purposes, innocent. Their tragedy is therefore, in a sense, the more acute.

A similar instance of underplaying a religious significance occurs in Part 7 where the question is asked : "who gives a bugger for / the Dolorous Stroke" (In P. 162). David Blamires has commented, "the Dolorous Stroke is invoked only to be immediately dismissed as irrelevant in the extremity of the circumstances."[44] Several effects are achieved here. Firstly, the "Dolorous Stroke" has been shorn of its specifically Christian symbolism. It stands for that in man, whatever it is, which causes strife and, more immediately, has caused the war. The dismissal of it is partially, in the face of an overwhelming reality, an impatience with the whole fabric of antique allusion that David Jones has constructed. However, David Blamires was wrong to leave it as that, for one has the profound feeling that, despite everything, John Ball and his companions care very much about the "Dolorous Stroke." The same dark fate that engulfed Balin, then Arthur and the Table Round, now

---

44. "Kynge Arthur Ys Not Dede," Agenda, v (Spring-Summer 1967), 166.

threatens to overtake them.

An aspect of the heroic world which might have been illustrated from Welsh, English, or French heroic material, but for which David Jones chose to use Malory, is the idea of comradeship. In the past a peculiar bond, overriding all other considerations, existed among the members of a band of warriors. This was based upon their common allegiance to a single leader, whose personality and prowess probably had as much to do with his authority as inherited privilege. During the Great War the situation was different. This was not as a result of the leadership being deficient. There is some criticism of the "Staff toffs" (In P. 112) with their "white-man talk" (In P. 155); but, on the whole, the officers are shown to possess the qualities necessary for leadership, even including the "green-gilled corporal,/ returned to company last Wednesday / from some Corps educare" (In P. 172). Mr. Jenkins' platoon respect him. In the final offensive,

> He notes the conventional sign
> and there is the deeply inward effort of spent men who would
> make response for him,
> and take it at the double. (In P. 166)

What is different about the Great War from the Heroic Age is the impersonality of the whole system. For instance, the fighting is no longer hand-to-hand with all the opportunities which that method gave to a warrior to demonstrate his prowess. The qualities required of officers and men alike are discipline, fortitude, and an almost blind devotion to duty. Under these circumstances, loyalties do not form around the person of any outstanding individual. But a strange sense

of fellowship does evolve among the men based upon their communal life, the fact that they share the same commonplaces and suffer the same ills.

Three men had constructed an improvised tent using their groundsheets. One of them, Private Saunders, was seconded to a different duty. He had to leave, taking his groundsheet with him. His two companions were quite disconsolate : "For such breakings away and dissolving of comradeship and token of division are cause of great anguish when men sense how they stand as perilous and boundary in this world " (In F. 137). The mock-heroic tone appears at first to be used to ridicule this trivial incident. There seems to be no comparison between this and, say, the dissolution of the Table Round. Nevertheless, the tone is deliberately employed to disguise the full poignancy of the human predicament. The concealed implication is just how painful such apparently small matters may be to those who are involved in them. Of John Ball, Signaller Oliver, and a Lewis gunner, it is said that "these three loved each other, but the routine of their lives made chances of foregathering rare." (In F. 159). When one reaches that stage in the account where "one by one the line gaps" (In F. 162), then one appreciates the truth of the precarious but intense friendships of wartime. A more complex picture is presented in the description of a generals' meeting given by Private Saunders to the men of "D" Company :

> ... this groom's brother Charlie that was a proper crackler and had done posh job back there reckoned he heard this toff he forgot his name come out of their Gen'ral's and say as how it was going to be a first class balloons and smothering of Division men and reckoned as how he'd throw in his mit an' be

> no party to this so-called frontal attack never for no threat nor entreaty, for nor, he says, blubbin' they reckon, in this noble fellowship wholly mischiefed. (In P. 138)[45]

On the one hand, the parody of Malory is used to play down the cruel facts of military strategy and to gloss over them in one breath with the gossip of the rank-and-file. On the other hand, despite the burlesque tone, some measure of the stature of the general who spoke out against the human wantage is gained from the comparison of his dilemma with that of King Arthur. Behind all this is the knowledge that for "this noble fellowship" to be "wholly mischiefed" is to see one's constant companions of months or even years fall down dead all around one.[46]

Much of the impressiveness of Jones's medieval allusions comes from their sheer density of occurrence. This is especially true of his debt to Malory. Part 4 alludes to the madness of Lancelot brought on by his betrayal of Guinevere in lying with Elaine; and how the situation was aggravated by the Queen's impervionness to any explanation of enchantment. Hen "ran vent-wit in a shirt for the queen's unreason" (In P. 66).[47] They often alienate themselves by the betrayal of their own nature, and this, in turn, is often exacerbated by the fact that an unreasoning intransigency often precludes any possibility of reconcilement. Thus, the domestic quarrel in Malory comes to symbolize a root-cause of much of the misery in the world, including war. In Part 7 mention is

---

45. See In Parenthesis, Part 6, P^{9}, on p.219.
46. See below, pp.168-170, for a fuller discussion of this passage.
47. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, P^{12}, on p.203.

made of silk-fire which "rides the air / on bronze-tipped bronze fly," and suddenly strikes at man out of the darkness "like Gawlon's brunchon that struck invisible" (In P. 100).[48] Or again, there is a cook among the non-combatant personnel who

> ... goes with this rout like
> the worshipful Bannamin
> the tumor of brochon
> the broth-mulch. (In P. 119)[49]

Bannamin was one of the greatest Round Table knights, though he served for a year unrecognized as a kitchen-knave; so this man wears on his tunic, almost indistinguishable because of spatters of grease, a decoration for gallantry (In P. 110).

There is one passage in In Parenthesis which especially demonstrates the way in which David Jones manipulates a whole complex of medieval allusions. It is known as the "Boast of Bel." The speaker is Welsh, and his "mighty antique greatness" (In P. 79) associates him with Malory's Sir La Cote Male Taile.[50] He "articulates his English with an alien ease." As a representative of the oldest politically important race in Britain, he is able to sum up in himself the successive stages in the country's history. He commences with:

> My fathers were with the Black Prince of Wales
> at the pasture of
> the blind Bohemian king.
> They served in those fields ... (In P. 79)

---

48. Ibid., Part 7, n[32], on p.225.
49. Ibid., Part 5, n[27], on p.215.
50. Cf. In Parenthesis, p.70, "Del de la Cote male taile." See Part 4, n[22], on p.205.

The incident referred to is the battle of Crecy at which the Prince of Wales, the eldest son of Edward III, distinguished himself. The following is J.R. Green's account of the relevant part of the action :

> The bowmen and men-at-arms held their ground steadily, while the Welshmen were stabbing the horses in the mêlée, and bringing knight after knight to the ground. Soon the great French host was wavering in a fatal confusion. "You are my vassals, my friends," cried the blind King of Bohemia, who had joined Philip's army, to the nobles around him : "I pray and beseech you to lead me so far into the fight that I may strike one good blow with this sword of mine!" Linking their bridles together, the little company plunged into the thick of the combat to fall as their fellows were falling.[51]

By this stage the Welsh were a part of the kingdom of England, their prince was an Englishman, and their countrymen fought for the English cause. The foundations of the contemporary situation had been laid.

There follows a paraphrase of Section 30 of Nennius' Historia Brittonum, giving the twelve battles of Arthur.[52] But the references do not end with that period of crisis; they continue back into the time of the Roman occupation and the legendary history of Britain, principally as this is found in The Mabinogion and the notes Lady Guest appended to her translation. The form of the whole passage is based on a

---

51. John R. Green, A Short History of the English People, Everyman's Library, 1915 (rev. 1960), I, 212-213.

52. See An Examination, Part 4, $\frac{370}{F}$, on p.203. See also J.A. Giles, trans. Six Works of Gildas and Nennius (London, 1841), pp.28-29.

convention of heroic literature.[53] H.M. Chadwick writes that a "prominent characteristic of heroic poetry" is "the haunting of warriors over their own personal prowess and the deeds they have performed or are going to perform."[54] When one comes to consider the "Quest of Dof" in relation to the above statement, it is to be supplemented by its ambivalent nature.

> You ought to ask: Why,
> what is this,
> what's the meaning of this,
> Because you don't ask,
> although the spear-shaft
> drips,
> there's neither bleeding - not a roof-tree. (In P. 84)[55]

Peredur, the Welsh Grail hero, failed to ask the meaning of what he saw at the Castle of Wonders. Therefore the land fell under a curse and the Fisher King remained wounded. A similar responsibility is laid upon the reader to understand what is the ultimate meaning of the "Quest." The whole complicated attitude of man towards war, the guilt he has incurred as well as the bloodshed he has striven to avert - these are the theme of the "Quest." Dof, representing all men, embodies in himself the immoveable causes of human tragedy, however accidental or trivial these may be. The technique is reminiscent of

---

53. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, H^{37}, on p.207.
54. Chadwick, Heroic Age, p.326.
55. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, H^{37A}, on p.210. See also Weston, From Ritual to Romance, p.10.

Vaihtman's Song of Ivaine, as well as of the Roman Taliesin.[56] But he is a kind of Virgilian-figure, one who has "forewarned all."[57] He

was the spear in Balin's hand
that made waste King Pellam's land. (In P. 79)[58] ;

he was

the elder in the little bush
whose bibemahlon-and
undid,
unmade victorious toil... (In P. 80)[59]

On the other hand, he was present when the head of Bran the Blessed was buried under the Tower of London, as a talisman to protect this island from invasions and he became impassioned at the thought of it being ottmined because of the arrogance of Arthur who was determined to defend the realm by his own might alone.[60]

Again, he is but a victim of forces beyond him - a member of one or other of the three emigrant hosts of British legend. David Jones has written in a footnote :

> The repeated spoliation of the Island by means of foreign entanglements and expeditionary forces across the channel - a subject occurring in Welsh tradition, and reflecting,

---

56. Giles, Gildas and Nennius, pp.41-43.
57. T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land. Quoted in the Preface to The Anathemata, p.26.
58. See Vinaver's Malory, Book IX, Chaps. xv-xvi, pp.64-65.
59. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, F[37F], on p.200.
60. Ibid., Part 4, F[37K], on p.209. See also Guest, Mabinogion, p.292.

> no doubt, the redisposition of troops in the late Roman age, to support the claims of rival candidates to the Purple, and to stem the increasing barbarian pressure at different frontiers.[61]

The topicality of this in relation to the Great War is unmistakable. Dai voices the agony and bewilderment of ordinary soldiers, of men deprived of all personal initiative. His refrain is, "O bleedd hoed hold the ntaiplings from the narrow sea" (_In P._ 92, 93); and, in an epodal, he excoriates the "Lord Agravaine" who "urges with repulsive lips, he counsels : he nots us into expeditionary war" (_In P._ 93). But it is not only the "council of the counsellors" that is to blame; for, at the very conclusion of Christ, Dai declares : "But I hold the tunics of these - / I watched them work the terrible embroidery that He put on" (_In P._ 95). Throughout the whole passage, present in the very nature of the references, to Malory, to _The Mabinogion_, runs the theme of national pride. Helen, the mother of Constantine, became associated in Welsh tradition with a British princess whose beauty lured an Emperor, Maxen Wledig, to this island, and who in turn sent her followers with him to reconquer Rome.[62] For Dai, this same Helen of the Hosts takes on yet another significance. She becomes the embodiment, the myth, of all that "homeland" means to men fighting abroad.

> Helen Cunedydunum is ours;
> she's the heart of the Rig'mant,
> * * * * * *

---

61. Ibid., Part 4, H[37K], on p.209. Cf. Lloyd, _History of Wales_, I, 93, on Maximus; and see Guest, _Mabinogion_, pp.297, 303-305.

62. Ibid., Part 4, H[37K], on pp.208-209. See Guest, _Mabinogion_, pp.97, 303-305. Cf. Lloyd, _History of Wales_, I, xlvii.

She's the girl with the sparkling eyes,

* * * * * * *

Ben Llwyddawg she is - more she is than
Helen Argive. (In P. 80-81)

If irony and paradox in Dai's boast are what reveal the outlook, in all its human vastness, of ordinary soldiers; quite different is the passage in Part 7 in which they are honoured by being assimilated in death with the greatest heroes of history and legend. They are

Like those other who steadily the land
Like Britain
Lancelot de Galis
Alisaund le Orphelin
Roumaine who was youngest
of all of them in chief's-shade
et Oswald Thrasopylae
or the sweet brothers Balin and Balan
embraced beneath their single monument. (In P. 163)

Not only heroes, but ordinary men, are what make a country; and their sacrifice, however it may be overtaken by oblivion, is the foundation upon which the future is built.

An immense compression for the unsung and "unknown warrior" is what ultimately emerges from David Jones's adaptation of the ethos of heroic literature. This much is at once revealed even by the name of the hero, John Bull, through whose sensibility a great part of the action is apprehended. In one sense he is a version of "John Bull"; in another he is still the ordinary patient alive to the distresses of ordinary people.[63] This attitude of David Jones is not antipathetic to

63. See Neville Braybrooke, "David Jones, Painter and Poet," Queen's Quarterly, LXX (Winter 1963), 510.

heroic conventions. Indeed, R.W. Chambers has written that

> In the old heroic poetry we get a glimpse of the thoughts of those men whose unrecorded lives and deaths have done more towards the building up of Europe than have the intrigues and quarrels of their lords.[64]

In Parenthesis goes further. The old heroic mode is permeated by a Christian code of love. At a later stage I hope it will emerge how even heroes can further evolve to become "the many men so beautiful" of the title to Part 1.

David Jones's conception of the heroic is central to an understanding of In Parenthesis. Though the same cannot be said of The Anathemata it is interesting to note the occasional recurrence of aspects of the earlier theme. Perhaps the most obvious example is the use of the terminology of war in the later work to describe cultural phenomena. The clergy officiating at the mass are called those "rear-guard details in their quaint attire, heedless of incongruity, unconscious that the flanks are turned and all connecting files withdrawn or liquidated ..." (Ana. 50).

A very interesting note in "Mabinog's Mitungy" throws light on the whole of Jones's treatment of History.

> Owing to the success of the later Launcelot-Guinevere theme as a romance motif, the earlier, more heroic and more political

---

64. Widsith: A Study in Old English Heroic Legend (Cambridge, 1912), p.185. But cf. Jackson, The Gododdin, p.14 : "... in heroic literature (which is not a military gazette) the only people who are of the slightest interest are the lords, the nobles, the 'officers,' and ... the rest are a mob rarely if ever mentioned...."

theme in the "moste pytouous tale of the morte Arthure saune gwerdon" has been somewhat overshadowed (Ang. 196, n[1]).

In the context of The Anathemata this gleaned an oblique reference to the political struggles of the sub-Roman period; but, if applied in retrospect to the earlier work, it will be seen how David Jones's predilection for a literature of action rather than of love has governed his choice of incident from Malory.

There is only one allusion, however, in The Anathemata which can properly be said to be heroic in spirit. This is the note of tragedy sounded with reference to the Second World War at the end of "Angle-land" :

O Balin & Balan!
for them I mourn both
the Anathemata
beyond the knot place
of our dear feet. (Ang. 185)

Though the heroic ideal was given its final expression in In Parenthesis, many other ideas first voiced in that work were not fully developed till The Anathemata. It is with these that the following chapters are concerned.

There is one final point to be made. This chapter has been mainly concerned with the way in which medieval romance function in In Parenthesis. However, anterior to this, is the fact that David Jones has not only used heroic materials but, no matter what the presentation, he has also been inspired by ideals largely consonant with the ethos of the heroic age. This is the same virtue which W.P. Ker claimed to have

found in Thomas Gray, and which make him declare the latter to be the first true exponent of romanticism in modern times.[65]

65. Kerr, Cambridge History, X, 225.

The difference between *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* is less one of source material than of attitude to it. What was peripheral to the earlier work becomes central to the later one. In the former, the narrative of the interaction of name, event, and character in a contemporary situation is to the fore. The historical perspective is introduced to lend significance to this. The actual situation, the association of Welsh and English as companions in a common venture, is the justification for the introduction of their ancestral lore. The latter work is less personal, it is more public. It is concerned not with individuals so much as with nations. The history of the country is the subject; and the physical fact of Britain is the context in which the activities of various races are viewed. It is no wonder, therefore, that by the time of *The Anathemata* an important aspect of David Jones's sense of the past has come to be an intense awareness of place and of the accumulated atmosphere which inheres in place. In that work he writes that there are

> ... always
> the inward continuities
> of the site
> of place. (Ana. 90)

The suggestion is that a locality tends to shape the human history enacted in it.

To an extent, this sense of place was already present in *In Parenthesis*, and is there often associated with a concern for folk-life. John Ball was glad to escape from "the unusable nostalgia of depots" (*In P.* 29) - a nostalgia encouraged, I suppose, by the comparative inactivity and the consequent leisure to think about home, and about those troops already departed for the front. This he disliked. But as he himself moved forward, he became aware of a nostalgia of a different type. This time it was for the normal life that war had displaced. So is preceding "where the road leads, where no men gone, where the straight road leads; where the road had led old men asleep on wagons beneath the green, girls with baskets, linen-veiled, children dawdling from the Eyetavios on a Sunday morning" (*In P.* 30). Occasionally he becomes aware of a normal existence continuing beyond the area of combat : "He heard, his ears incredulous, the nostalgic puffing of a locomotive, far off, across forbidden fields..." (*In P.* 50).

Arrived at the trenches, John Ball senses "near habitation, a folk-life here, a people, a culture developed already rooted and venerable" (*In P.* 49). "So quickly had they learned the mode of this locality, what habit best suited this way of life, what most functioned, was to the purpose, and easily obtained" (*In P.* 70). G.S. Homans, an American sociologist, has drawn attention to the fact that any group of men who have come together for a special purpose will build up their own peculiar social existence.[1] This, in effect, was what was happening among

---

1. See Trefor M. Owen, *Welsh Folk Custom* (Gwalia, 1959), pp.19-20.

the soldiers in the trenches. For David Jones the place in which this life developed was irrevocably associated with it; and as the physical features had helped to create the mode of existence, so the latter tended to hallow the place : "And you too are annihilated, you too are of this people - there will be an indelible characterization - you'll tip-toe when they name the place" (In P. 49).

The Anathemata has very little description of place in the characteristic vein of the earlier work. There is, however, one notable example in the description of Peter and John following the man with the pitcher of water in order that they might discover where to hold the Passover.

> By the two that follow Aquarius
> toiling the day meander :
> through the byre
> under the low porch
> up the turning stair
> to the high nave
>
> where the board is... (Ana. 52).

The footnote runs as follows :

> This passage ... reflects memories I have of walking in the lanes of Jerusalem, the excessive dryness and white dust, the low arched entries and stairs up into cool interior rooms. (Ana. 52, n[2])

Few other passages in The Anathemata have this same vivid sense of the physical aspect of place.

Before illustrating the way in which the sense of place is used in that work, it will be useful to note some of the attitudes of the

author on the subject as these are reflected in his occasional writings. He has a keen admiration for James Joyce, of whom he says that he, "of all artists ever ... was the most dependent on the particular, on place, etc., locality."[2] His favourite example of Joyce's technique is a sentence from Anna Livia Plurabelle: "Norwegen's thing made southfolk's place." He writes that

> Joyce's line reads ... include ... "how then became now" and also include the change of people on the unchanged site. All this they hold up even independent of the context. Given the context, we know the city referred to, and we have the Viking assembly or Thing, "meeting," in the fullness of time, the Georgian assembly room by the same Black Water and the Dublin of "now."[3]

From one point of view, The Apotheosis might be considered a commentary on this particular method of verbal concentration. The work is an attempt to indicate the process of history by focusing on the fixed nature of place. The passage of time and its effects are apprehended by the way in which the "static" element of location proves in fact to undergo a type of evolution under the influence of different peoples. This relates to Jones's ideas on the problems confronting an artist of any kind.

> The poet is born into a given historical situation and it follows that his problems - i.e. his problems as a poet - will be what might be called "situational problems."[4]

---

2. Epoch and Artist, p.304.
3. Ibid., p.210.
4. Preface to The Anathemata, p.22.

He then proceeds to indicate his own "situation" :

> What is this writing about? I answer that it is about one's own "thing," which now is unavoidably part and parcel of the Western Christian nou, as inherited by a person whose perceptions are totally conditioned and limited by and dependent upon his being indigenous to this island. In this it is necessarily insular; within which insularity there are the further conditionings contingent upon his being a Londoner, of Welsh and English parentage, of Protestant upbringing, of Catholic subscription.[5]

The part of David Jones's nou which is of immediate concern is the fact that he is a native of the British Isles with peculiar connections with Wales and London. The Anathemata is therefore primarily concerned with the effect of history upon these two specific regions. What ultimately happens is that from a description of a place there emerges its history, and the history of the peoples connected with it.

The author's technique raises one serious question which he puts to himself : "To what degree, for instance, is it possible for the 'name' to evoke the 'local habitation' long since gone?"[6] This introduces the problem of the use made by him both of proper names since superseded, and of terms belonging to a language other than modern English. As one delves into this work, so one becomes increasingly aware of the scope of the author's grasp of history. Not only is it a history of places, but to be properly understood it has also to be seen as a history of language. In order to illustrate the foregoing points, I

---

5. Ibid., p.11.
6. Ibid., p.25.

am going to consider briefly a few passages.

"Anglo-Land" is an account of the Anglo-Saxon invasions of southern Britain. David Jones presents no straightforward story:

> Feet where they placed their ings-names / where they spoil the coulter deep / in the open Engol fields / to this day./ How many poles / of their broad Anglo hides / to the small scattered plots, to the lightly furrowed acres, / that once did quilt Boudicca's royal body? (Ann. 111)

"They" in the first sentence is not specified as such. The name of the people is to be inferred from the information subsequently provided. The adjectives "Engel" and "Anglo" taken in conjunction with the title of the section leave little doubt as to the agent. Nevertheless, this is a typical feature of Jones's later style, that peoples and persons are not directly named but are implied by what is predicated of them.[7] The reference to "ings-names" is an allusion to a method used by historians, for example, J.N.L. Myres, to discover the progress of the Teutonic invasions from place-name evidence.[8] The distribution of places with the suffix "-ings" gives some indication of the relative density of their initial penetration. The remainder of that sentence states that the descendants of those incomers are still the farmers of modern England.

The passage continues with a question which in itself assumes that

---

7. See the unpubl. doct. diss. (Michigan, 1966) by Charles Joseph Stanshumer, "The Region of the Ship-wheel: A Handbook for The Anathemata of David Jones," p.80.

8. J.N.L. Myres in Collingwood and Myres, Roman Britain and the English Settlements, p.368.

a cultural change has taken place. This is the replacement of a Celtic system of land division by an Anglo-Saxon one. Here the use of the technical terms erw[9] and gwely[10] is a concise method of indicating the land measurements current prior to the invasions, and of simultaneously characterising them as Celtic. The fact that these words are Welsh, and that terms such as these were not defined till the tenth century Laws of Hywel Dda, is offset by the fact that where early Celtic customs survived at all they did so in Wales, and the Laws tended to regularise immemorial practice.

A little later in the same section occurs a passage describing the effect upon the Romano-British inhabitants of the Teutonic invasions :

> From the fora
> to the forests.
> Out from gens Romulum
> into the Weal-kin
> dinas-men gone aethwlad
> civen gone wold-men
> ... from Lindum to London
> bridges broken down. (Ane. 113)

The Latin "fora" from forum is used to symbolise towns, the destruction of which by the Anglo-Saxons forced the indigenous population to take to the countryside. The alliteration underlines the contrast. They became strangers within the land which had once been their own; and by

---

9. See Lloyd, History of Wales, I, 295. Cf. Rhys, Welsh People, pp.216-219.

10. See Rhys, Welsh People, pp.195-196; and E.F. Jacob, The Fifteenth Century (Oxford, 1961), p.38.

their conquerors they were designated Wealas, a word derived from Wealh 'foreigner.'[11] Again Welsh is used to indicate the Celtic element, so that the following line uses that language to oppose the post city inhabitants of the Celts with their present outlawry (Ana. 113, II[2]). Finally, "Lindum" is the Latin for "Lincoln."[12] London is kept in the medial form to make the translation into the nursery-rhyme echo of "bridges broken down." The meaning is that from Lincoln to London the land has been laid waste.

The first section of the whole work, "Rite and Formulae," captures the movement of the land itself from the standpoint of geological time, rather than from the myopic vision of ordinary men and women. Geology imbues the countryside with a quasi-organic status, which allows it to be treated anthropomorphically. This tendency is carried further by David Jones in a late work, The Sleeping Lord,[13] where he was probably much influenced by Finnegans Wake. In the place under discussion he writes that man first appeared on earth:

> Before the salt-waters / had dwelling-decreed a high hill-water / for the water-maid / to love her maiden heir.... Long ages since they'd troughed, in solid Ordovician / his Dale had for Pauline. (Ana. 66)

---

11. See The Anathemata, p.113, III[1,3]; and see T.G.E. Powell, The Celts (London, 1958), p.174; and An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, ed. Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller (London, 1898), s.v. "wealh".

12. See Eilert Ekwall, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names, 4th ed. (Oxford, 1960), s.v. "Lincoln."

13. See Agenda, V (Spring-Summer 1967), 28-54.

The literal sense indicates the effect of glaciation in forming the familiar contours of the land. For the present purpose, what is especially relevant is the way in which the name of the lake is used to transform a geological fact into a myth. The English name is Bala Lake which supplies the "Bala bed"; the Welsh name is Llyn Tegid (Lake of Tegidus), which designates the one for whom the couch was prepared (Ann. 67, 1[1]). Tegidus is given in Hamilton Ms.9859 as the name of the great-grandfather of Cunedda.[14] Historians consider the latter to have been a Romanized Celt from north of Hadrian's Wall whose people were moved about A.D. 400 as foederati into North Wales in order that they might replace the troublesome Irish of that region.[15] By using the word "Tegidus" not "Tegid," the Roman derivation of much of Welsh civilization and culture is emphasized; and a suggestion is made of the way geological time dovetails into historical time, and of how the historical drama has to be enacted in a far older setting than man, with his name-giving propensity, acknowledged.

In "Anglo-land," reference is made once more to Cunedda's family in the lines:

> In Mavienus vild Meirion? .... has togo'd Rhufon / (gone Aetoon) / come away to the Lake / in the Bittern's low seat? (Ann. 112)

"Mavienus" was a grandson, Rovenus a son, of Cunedda. Their names

---

14. Lloyd, History of Wales, I, 117-118.
15. See Collingwood, Roman Britain, pp.283, 289-290.

confirm the Roman connections of the family. Traditionally, these two, together with the seven other sons of Dyneddo, give their names to the cantrefs of northern Wales, for instance, to Nolddwyfid and Rhufoniog.[16] Here the function of the historical allusion is to indicate those very regions. They are the landmark parts that David Jones's mythical voyager from the Mediterranean bye-passes as he sails for the Thames and London. The history behind the place-names rather than the names themselves is used to designate those regions.

In Parenthesis used Celtic myth and legend to indicate the true nature of the First World War soldiers, and to indicate the type of atmosphere which their physical surroundings conjured up for them. In The Anathemata myth and legend function very differently. There David Jones relates them to place in the same way as I have shown him to do with history. They are important as a way of designating a region by referring either to a mythical figure from whom the modern place-name derives, or to a legend associated with the spot. Thus in "Middle-sea and Lear-sea," there is a comparison of Jones's mythical voyager with the Irish sea-deity, Manannan. There is present an oblique reference to the Isle of Man which derives from the god's name (Ana. 107, n[2]).[17]

The first land reached by the Mediterranean explorers was the family Isles, but these are not directly mentioned. They are referred to as "the horse-king's *inunloe*" (Ana. 97, [illegible]). The islands belonged to the

---

16. See The Anathemata, p.112, nn[5,6]. See also Lloyd, History of Wales, I, 117-119.

17. Rhys, Arthurian Legend, p.355.

scala of King Mark of Cornwall. In Welsh his name, "March," means "stallion" (Ane. 98, N[1]). This may be connected in some way with the story that he had equine ears.[18] But the text no more than hints at such matters. One important aspect of this close association between a place and a legend in the antiquity it lends to the latter by connecting it with a time-scale relevant to geographical features. "Middle-sea and Lear-sea" has a reference to the region "where Tristan's sands run out to land's last end" (Ane. 98). The allusion is to "Wace's last hundred," to "the drowned village of Lennuyx" (Ane. 101). Sir John Rhys in his Arthurian Legend wrote:

> From that mythic land came Tristrem, just as ... Lancelot from the verdant abode of the Lake Lady who was his foster-mother. Without dwelling on the probably extreme antiquity of the myths underlying these romances, one may venture to point out that we seem to have evidence, dating from the early portion of the Roman occupation of this country, to the equation of some such a hero as Tristrem or Lancelot with the Heracles of classical mythology; witness the fact that Ptolemy calls Hartland Point Ἡρακλέους Ἄκρον, or the Promontory of Hercules.[19]

On the basis of this, the idea of Greek names in the pre-Christian era reaching a place called after Tristrem is not improbable.[20] It is necessary to emphasize this aspect of myth, namely its great antiquity.

---

18. Rhys, pp.356-357.

19. Rhys, p.362.

20. I am, of course, speaking generically. See Roger S. Loomis, The Development of Arthurian Romance (London, 1963), p.79.

Behind the earliest written record of any myth (in the case of northern Europe, this is generally medieval), there are usually many generations stretching back into the early days of a race's history.

These same Greek seamen in the following lines are made to voyage, not only across several seas, but through various national spheres of influence at diverse eras in history. They begin in Greek waters, anchored in a "thalassa" (Ann. 98). Then they traverse a Roman "mare," and enter the northern waters of an "Abondsee," where, to be more precise, they make their way over "Dylan's mbreedd" (Ann. 99) and "Iguaine's dylenau." A footnote informs the reader that "mbreedd" and "dylanau" both mean "sea" in Welsh, that language again symbolizing the whole Brythonic branch of Celtic (Ann. 99, $n^{3,4}$). Dylan, who "took at his birth the nature of the waves" (Ann. 99, n^{4}), occurs in The Mabinogion,[21] and accordingly characterizes his seas as those south of Wales, while the name of Iguaine associates the other waters with Cornwall.[22]

In a passage previously quoted there is an instance of myth being referred to more for its connotative than its denotative qualities. This is the exception to the rule as far as The Anathemata is concerned. "Before the mold-waters / had drumlin-domed a high hill-water for the water-maid / to love her maiden hair" (Ann. 66), is the relevant passage. Of Sir Lancelot's foster-mother being a "lake-fairy," David Jones has written, "this connection with water-maidens and wonder-cities under

---

21. See Guest, Mabinogion, p.69.

22. Iguaine was the wife of the "duke of Tyntagil" in "Cornewaill" before Uther married her. See Vinaver's Malory, Book I, Chap. 2, p.2.

poole is at least suggestive of Celtic affinities.... The folk tradition of the insular Celts seems to present to the mind a half-aquatic world."[23] The sense of the present passage is that the glaciation was preparing abodes which the imagination of man would subsequently people with water-nymphs. What lies behind his allusion is a belief that geological features are no less wonderful than naiads; and those numinous beings are no less real, nor did they evolve any less naturally, than mountain lakes, just because they are born of the imagination and not of physical nature.

The points which have been raised so far should allow of an attempt to outline briefly the narrative structure of the earlier part of The Anathemata. Basically it is an account of the first recorded voyage made to these Isles by the fourth century B.C. Greek explorer, Pytheas.[24] It is a mistake to confuse him initially with Brutus, the eponymous hero of all British pseudo-history.[25] Fiction is used by David Jones to illustrate some physical feature of the land, or to indicate the temper of the period in which it arose; never as the framework upon which his main structure reposes. Having established his basic identity then it is possible to view Pytheas as if he were one of the Celtic shape-shifting magicians, so that at one moment he may bear a resemblance to Brutus, and at another be associated with T.S. Eliot's

---

23. Enoch and Arthur, p.238; see also Rhys, Arthurian Legend, p.395.
24. See Lloyd, History of Malay, I, 27-29.
25. See Michael Alexander, "David Jones, Hierophant," Agenda, V (Spring-summer 1967), 121.

"Phoenicean exiles."[26] The geography which forms the content of the voyage is used as a means of introducing the history of the places which are seen or sighted en route. Part 3, "The Lady of the Pool," finds the ship anchored in the Pool of London; and, with the destination having been reached, the character of the narrative begins to change.

On the first page of the section occurs this description of London, "Bolin's oppidum, the greatest hush in nowlands" (Ana. 124). In the compass of these seven words is achieved the whole history of London. Belinus was, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, one of the most famous of the early kings of Britain.[27] He may therefore be taken to typify the Celtic element in the history of the city. He reigned in Trinovantum, the city of Troia Nova, founded supposedly by the Trojan Brutus.[28] Historically, the original of Nov they was civitas Trinovantum, that is Camulodunum or Colchester. However, tradition associated it with London.[29] "Oppidum" shows that London came under

---

26. The Waste Land, Sec. 1. See The Anathemata, p.110: "the drowned Syro-Phoenician."

27. See Lewis Thorpe, Index to his trans. of The History of the Kings of Britain by Geoffrey of Monmouth, Penguin Books, 1966, s.v. "Belinus."

28. Thorpe, s.v. "Trinovantum."

29. See The Anathemata, p.124, ff[3]; and cf. Collingwood, Roman Britain, pp.46-56; and Lloyd, History of Wales, I, 49. Cunobelinus (reigned AD 10 to AD 40/43), the ruler of the Catuvellauni, conquered the Trinovantes and took over their capital which was Camulodunum (modern Colchester). Thus the civitas of the Trinovantes referred to by Caesar could not have been London, but must have been their capital, Colchester.

Roman rule, and according to Tacitus it was the wealthiest of the towns in the Ireland.[30] "Burh" is the Anglo-Saxon for a fortified site.[31] Under the royal line of Wessex, London recovered her commercial pre-eminence.[32] "Wordlende" by substituting the German d for the English th is taken to be representative of the Scandinavian element in the areas of the city. (If one might digress here for a moment : it is interesting to note that there is no mention of the Roman contribution to the city's life. As Charles J. Stranahan has pointed out, the only reference in The Anathemata to the Romans is a derogatory mention of that "David's balm, Gwilim Ramsday - who thought no theme to ask that is theme to any" (Ana. 213), which is based on a hostile comment in The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Ana. 212, n[2]).[33] However, in "Religion and the Muses," an article written in 1941, David Jones did say that

> the Roman peace-gangs are forgiven for the sake of the astonishing freedom by which the Roman vision made the stone leap-frog in the under-earths and with slow-motion embrace the round areas).[34]

The second half of the quotation is adapted from an excerpt from the Roman Fabrick Song given in a footnote (Ana. 124, n[4]). Throughout the remainder of the section there occurs a complex of literary allusions

---

30. See Collingwood, Roman Britain, p.169.

31. See Bosworth-Toller, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, s.v. "burh".

32. Sir Frank M. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1947), pp. 531-533.

33. Stranahan, "Regimen of the Ship-stem," p.169.

34. Epoch and Artist, p.99.

which build up a composite picture of London that carries the history well on into the Middle Ages. This method of grouping references relating to a specific topic in one division of the work has been identified by James S. Atherton as Joyce's regular practice in Finnegans Wake.[35]

In a sense, the lavender seller or Lady of the Pool, is a personification of London. Her reminiscences embrace the corporate memories of the city. Once Jones's mythical voyager has met her, she becomes the focus of attention. The formal structure is her cockney monologue. She remarks: "From over the chapman-booths of level Southwark down the stiffing breeze that fronbes our Thames play out our trances." (Ann. 146). Again, this passage is adapted from Old Norse, this time from The Saga of Olaf the Saint (Ann. 146, N[8]). What is striking is the contrast in choice of references between those of In Parenthesis and those of The Anathemata. The former used Old Norse saga to lend weight to the portrayal of the Heroic Age. The latter seems to be attracted by Old Norse literature only in so far as it impinges on the geography of Britain. For instance, here it is the reference to Southwark that is important. Another area of London has been more precisely identified by indicating the part played in its past by Viking invaders.

Actual details of the description of the city are often supplied by literary sources which are peculiarly associated with it, such as Dunbar's "In Honour of the City of London." (Dunbar's authorship is

---

35. The Books at the Wake (London, 1959), p.220.

now considered to be uncertain).[36] The description of the women of the capital, "alone and lusty under lolli" (Ana. 124), and the reference to the church steeples, "In each blithe aeden / on gablon a bell-rope" (Ana. 162) - both these passages echo lines from Dunbar's poem.[37] Even one of the characters in Jones's London is taken direct from Langland's picture of the medieval city. This is "Rose the dish-seller" (Ana. 153, N^2). By such means the author realises a lively picture of the place, and one that is, by and large, derived from relics of the period which he seeks imaginatively to reconstruct.

Before proceeding with the way in which David Jones elaborates upon his account of the Middle Ages, a subject which leads away from the consideration of place, it should prove profitable to reflect for a moment upon what influences, other than Joyce, directed him to a concern for geomorphology and topography. In my Introduction, I indicated that he stands in some relation to the tradition of the regional novel, but this I suppose is subsumed under the heading, Joyce. What is probably very pertinent to the attitude of modern historians to these subjects. For example, J.N.L. Myres writes of the English invasions:

> If there is any period of our history which demands more than another a geographical treatment it is this. For the facts of geography determined the course of Anglo-Saxon settlement, and the surest - indeed the only - way to an understanding

---

36. See W.M. Mackenzie, ed. The Poems of William Dunbar (Edinburgh, 1932), Appendix G, pp.240-241.
37. See The Anathemata, p.124, N^2; and p.162, N^6, respectively.

> of its difficulties will be a knowledge of the landscape of England as it was in the fifth century of our era.[38]

David Jones shows himself aware of such trends in serious historical study, when he writes : "For the wise are not independent of geology" (Ann. 71). But perhaps an even more subtle influence was exerted upon him by one of his best loved of Welsh tales, that of Culhwch ac Olwen. In it occurs the famous hunt of the boar, Twrch Trwyth. David Jones comments in a footnote :

> If the hunt of the boar Twrch by the men and dogs of Arthur described in the tale of Culhwch is read with one eye on the Ordnance Survey's map, the Distribution of the Megaliths (sheet 7), the possibility of some connection between the itinerary of this great mythological hunt and the sites of the megaliths may suggest itself. (Ann. 100, N[1])

To be able to associate a story closely with an actual locale apparently appealed strongly to David Jones. He probably would approve of the similarities of Glyn Jones and Thomas Jones in respect of tales such as The Lady of the Fountain with its

> vague topography which contrasts so strongly with the precision of scene in the Four Branches and the routes marked so accurately across the pages of Culhwch and Olwen, of Nennius, and Rhonabwy.[39]

This concern for the detailed localisation of a scene is not restricted to geography, in the case of David Jones himself. He Localises

---

38. Myres, Roman Britain, p.232.
39. Introduction to The Mabinogion, Everyman's Library, 1949, p.xxvii.

similar case upon the portrayal of historical periods. This is especially noticeable in "The Lady of the Pool" section where he is deliberately attempting to create a myth of medieval London, but it is also present throughout the whole work. His reason for restricting himself to the pre-Reformation era (there are a couple of references to later naval history) will become clearer in my next chapter, but meantime it may be noted that it is twofold : an admiration for medieval principles of art, and a strong sense of the importance of the tradition of Catholic Christendom. Granted this, what one observes is the way Jones, like Joyce, relies upon the mention of a name or the use of a brief phrase to evoke a person, a policy, or a philosophy. To some extent, again like Joyce, he may have shared the primitive belief in the efficacy of names,[40] though from the discussion of his use of place-names, he would appear to believe not so much in names as in the historical significance enshrined in them. More probably, his reliance upon names is an integral part of his artistic theory which will be treated later.[41]

---

40. On Joyce, see Atherton, Books at the Wake, p.45.

41. In Stonehenge's discussion, "Regimen of the Ship-area," the problems of Jones's use of names, his allusive technique, and his appearance of footnotes, are considered. Within the brief compass of my study, I am unable to enter into these matters. For this reason I am, therefore, unwilling to make any critical pronouncements upon The Anathemata, and in my fifth chapter, which is devoted to literary appreciation, I have deliberately restricted myself to In Parenthesis.

The Lady of the Pool, in her account of how Geoffrey of Monmouth is no longer accepted by students of history, exclaims : "But Quo Warrantoes?" (Ans. 153). The surface meaning is the question, on what authority is he discredited; but the use of this variation of the term "Quo Warranto" introduces the idea of the great statute of that name promulgated by Edward I in 1278, and draws attention to the fact that his reign laid the foundation of statutory law in England.[42]

She discusses her various lovers, and wonders of one, "did blood doth have him young?" (Ans. 128-129) which carries the reader forward to 1349. Continuing in the same vein, she wonders whether he has become one of the clerks at Oxford, one of those "wasting their disputations till frigid syllogisms pulse like watery nature - by most exact art" (Ans. 129). The importance of logic in the Middle Ages is thus attested to, and also the love of organized debate, though in the course of the thirteenth century the latter began to be more circumscribed.[43] The author may be echoing here a sentence which he quotes in a footnote to an appreciation of Eric Gill written in 1940, namely that, "the syllogism is cold only to those who do not love truth."[44]

Even when she is describing the time of the year of the Passion, the Lady of the Pool uses authentic medieval language and paraphrases Chaucer's opening lines to The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales : "Then

---

42. For a succinct account of this statute, see H.L.G. Stone, Edward I (London, 1969), pp.16-17.

43. See Friedrich Heer, The Medieval World (London, 1962), pp.194-195.

44. Truth and Artist, p.302.

was the draughts of fresh noisted to the root by that shower that does all fruit engender" (Ana. 157). At one point, she scathingly refers to "a' admirable neoshin Nominalist" (Ana. 159), thereby the reader is reminded of the medieval controversy between the schools of philosophy, the nominalists and the realists. A recent work has stated that this debate was prominent during the first half of the twelfth century, but it notes that it "used to be held that nominalism and realism were synonymous with medieval thought."[45] David Jones was capitalising on the older view.

To say this, is in no way to disparage his achievement, for one of his remarkable virtues is the effort he makes to present an up-to-date a picture of the periods he covers as time will allow him to reconcile. This has already been noted in his interest in the geographical aspects of history. Of this problem, he has the following assessment to make at the end of the first section of The Anathemata :

> The findings of the physical sciences are necessarily mutable and change with fresh evidence or with fresh interpretation of the same evidence. This is an important point to remember with regard to the whole of this section of my text where I employ ideas based on more or less current interpretations of archaeological and anthropological data. Such interpretations, of whatever degree of probability, remain hypothetical. The layman can but employ for his own purposes the pattern available during his lifetime.[46]

---

45. Gordon Leff, Medieval Thought: St. Augustine to Ockham, Penguin Books, 1958, p.104.

46. The Anathemata, General Note to Section I, p.82.

One of the main instruments in advancing the knowledge of the past in the course of the present century, and one alluded to in the above quotation, has been archaeology. David Jones shows himself fully aware of the developments in that field. In the "Rite and Parabine" section, there is mention of an "ornament / young, toward the palm, / wearing the amulets of ivory and signed with the life-giving / ochre" (Ann. 77). What is in fact a reference to "the bones of the earliest known South Welsh" (Ann. 76, n[1]). The author, following the example of an historian such as J.E. Lloyd, commences his account of human life in Wales with the "Red Lady" of Paviland.[47] In Parenthesis has also a reference to the discovery of human remains, this time at Lambourne. The function of the allusion, however, is quite different. It is not the focal point; but is used as illustrative material, adding the dimension of age to the description of the dead soldiers as they lie "disordered like discarded garments or crumpled chin to shin-bone like a Lambourne find." (In P. 102). In Parenthesis sees the present in the light of the past. The Anathemata sees the past in the light of the present. The difference in perspective is summed up in the opposition of the two words, descendant and ancestor. Similarly, in the earlier work David Jones uses the latest scientific method for determining ethnic groups, namely the "cephalic index" (Ann. 113), to describe the racially diverse nature of No. I section : "their mixed round-skulls, long-barrow heads, nobble ends" (In P. 72). The intention is obviously

---

47. Lloyd, History of Wales, I, xxx.

humorous, the men themselves being quite oblivious of such sophisticated modes of cataloguing themselves. Perfectly serious, on the other hand, is the following mention of the same scientific procedure in The Anathemata : "If there are Welsh yet / in the Weltons / what's the cephalic index of the information" (Ana. 113). One method of ascertaining, under given circumstances, whether a submerged race has been assimilated by their conquerors or annihilated is to discover whether there is any appreciable change in the measurements of the skull.[48]

Not only the archaeologist but the social historian has come into his own in the past hundred years. An aspect of this is a zeal for period costume. David Jones in his Preface to The Anathemata expresses his delight at some "reproductions of two or three thirteenth-century drawings of Welsh foot-soldiers in J.R. Green's Short History of the English People."[49] J.G. Edwards' edition of Littere Wallie (Cardiff, 1940) is the most accessible source today for reproductions of the same originals.[50] "Kebinog's Liturgy" contains a description of Gwenhwyfar which is based on information at least partially obtained from a Guide to the Collection of Examples and Embroideries to be found at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff (Ana. 196, ff[8]).

The most significant feature distinguishing David Jones from the nineteenth century medievalists is that while he still uses chronicles

---

48. For an example of the use historians make of the "cephalic index", see Collingwood, Roman Britain, pp.16-17.

49. Preface to The Anathemata, p.41.

50. For their explanation, see Edwards, Introduction to Littere Wallie, pp.xxviii-xxix.

as they did, following the lead of scholars of whom Freeman may be considered typical; nevertheless he also utilises documentary and record evidence, which is at the basis of modern critical historiography. It is convenient to treat of these two aspects together. In Parenthesis speaks of "Geoffrey Arthur and his cooked histories" (In P. 89); and The Anathemata makes the Lady of the Pool swear "by the 'moidered tales / of Geoffrey, bishop of Asaph's / nor deemed the most incontinent liar on record" (Ana. 152). To an extent, this is a faithful portrayal of David Jones's attitude. Like J.H.E. Lynes, he probably preferred the non-literary approach of a Romulus when it came to a question of historicity.[51] He was also aware of the fact that Geoffrey had been attacked by his own contemporaries (Ana. 153, n[2]). V.H. Galbraith quotes the following story told by Gerald of Wales about a fellow Welshman who was possessed by devils :

> If the evil spirits oppressed him too much... the Gospel of St John was placed on his bosom, and the unclean spirits immediately vanished. But when that book was removed and the Historia Britonum [sic] substituted they returned in even greater numbers than before.[52]

However, David Jones did appreciate Geoffrey's work as literature, and has his lavender collar defend it in the following terms :

> those learn'd be ever apt to / burn phoenixes and are like to bury the cat that has much / mousing in her pot, being

---

51. Lynes, Roman Britain, p.329.

52. Historical Research in Medieval England (University of London : The Athlone Press, 1951), p.20.

> but six times dead. I'll as soon take / tale of Rose the dish-seller, that meddles Maid Marian in / the Lay of Robin with Tale's Lay. "Then quoth Marie..." (Ann. 153)

This is no more dofinoo of the relationship of the "lesson'd." David Jones writes of Geoffrey's History : "the myth proposes for our acceptance a truth more real than the historic facts alone discover" (Ann. 124, n[3]). This truth is the debt which western Europe owes to the classical tradition, and which is symbolized for Britain by the supposed derivation of the race from the Trojan Aeneas. Occasionally, David Jones is willing to bend history a little himself in order to underline some inherent symbolism in the facts. Of course, this characterizes his work as fiction rather than history, but he redeems it from much of the criticism levelled at the historical novelist by his sparing, self-conscious, and deliberate use of this license. A simple instance of this is his use of "Britannia Prima" to stand for the whole of England and Wales, whereas it was originally one of two, and then one of four, provinces.[53] He himself notes the deviation from historical accuracy (Ann. 206, n[3]). In "Mabinog'i Ithuny" he gives the following footnote :

> I use the names "Gwyteeny" and "Annâmiun" as symbols only of the two reactions to that state of things when the full weight of a materially powerful and advanced civilization is brought to bear upon peoples of a far earlier culture-phase. (Ann. 104, n[7])

---

53. Cf. Rhys, Welsh People, pp.103-104.

So say he uses the names of Cassibunus, the anti-Roman son of Sunobelinus, and of Amminius the pro-Roman son, "as symbols only" is too great a simplification. They are necessary for co-relating the date of the Passion with British history.[54] However, their significance is extended beyond their immediate historical role till they become representative of all humans in predicaments similar to their own. Unlike the previous example, there is no falsification of fact here.

Another reason for his defence of Geoffrey is that the latter's work became part of the traditional History of Britain (Ann. 153, ll. 2). As such it was accepted as authentic by most people, and was even used, as David Jones points out, to substantiate Welsh claims to independence. It is here that he diverges from the majority of his predecessors, and refers to the specific personal powers rather than to an historian's re-formulation of the situation or an annalist's account. I have found at least two references to the descent of the Welsh from the Trojan Brutus through his son, Kambre, in the Register of Archbishop John Pecham.[55] David Jones actually quotes a stereotyped Latin phrase "in Wallia vel in Kambria Walliae" (Ann. 55), to indicate that he is relying on documentary evidence (Ann. 54, ll. 6). Though unable to trace this precise phrase, anyone who rapidly peruses Rymer's Foedera will discover such official formulae as "in partibus Kambriae et Walliae" and "in

---

54. See Collingwood, Roman Britain, pp. 74-75.

55. J. Peckham Arch. Cant., Registrum Epistolarum, Memorials of Great Britain (London, 1884), II. 470, 473-474 (letters cecilvlll and cccliv, resp.).

Wallin of Marchia Wallico."[56]

This respect for the Historia Rerum Britannica as part of established tradition to covenant with his attitude towards place, with his intense awareness of locality. From the historical point of view, he seems to have grasped the lesson which Robert Bisley taught in "The Undergrowth of History,"[57] namely that though a tradition may say nothing of value about the period which it purports to describe, it may say a great deal about the ages in which it arose and flourished. In Perambulation provides several instances of his fondness for local tradition. Lance-Corporal Lewis, in a long reverie, lets his mind dwell for a moment on the

> story of Fan Shon Cotti... a local version of that general theme: outcast-robber-becomes-able-magistrate-married-to-beautiful-heiress. He is associated with the Rhiwson-Llandovery district.[58]

By means of such an allusion David Jones emphasizes the way in which a locality moulds its own historical image and thereby accrues to itself an even more unique atmosphere. On turning to The Anathemata one observes the same process at work, but in a much more complex fashion. In "Rodrigs" the Greek explorer echo "Ho Kradaios, Princes Stoix" (the author's maternal grandfather thus imaginatively transformed to the early days of Imperial Rome),[59] to repeat his ship before the following

---

56. Thomas Rymer, Foedera, II (London, 1705), 116, 172, *passim*.
57. Historical Association Pamphlet, General Series: G.30, 1955.
58. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, II[42], on p.211. Italics mine.
59. Michael Alexander, "David Jones, Hierophant," Agenda, V (Spring-Summer 1967), 121.

Thursday. He is met by the following threads :

> And, as for next Thor's Day's night tide
> tell the Top, to-g●-to
> Canute
> if he can find him
> down by the Gallow Well... (Ana. 119-120).

First of all, Thursday is reduced to its etymological components. That day was called after the Norse god of thunder. This piece of linguistic history introduces the part played by Scandinavia in the formation of English culture. On this basis it seems quite natural to use the explative "to-go-to Canute." But the mention of the latter's name affords an opportunity of identifying the scene of the incident by an aspect of its history.

> The allusion is to the Gallow Well Road district in Rotherhithe. The name is associated locally with an event described in The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, under the year 1016 : "Then came the ships to Greenwich and within a little space they went to London and they dug a great ditch on the south side and dragged their ships to the west side of the bridge..." (trans. Rohn edn 1849). (Ana. 120, n[3]).60

Whether this connection between place-name and chronicle account is historically accurate is not David Jones's immediate concern. What interests him is the living nature of historical tradition, and how people, actually resident in a region, are anxious to have a part and to preserve its memory. It is the inherent "historical" instinct of ordinary men and women which he underlines. Moreover, whether an event were historical or not, by the time it has lived in the imagination of people for centuries, it has inevitably become part of the history of the interven-

60. Italics mine.

ing period if not of the supposed one. He writes :

> This connection between Cormac's galleys and this street-name was, of all events, the popular tradition in my mother's girlhood (in the late eighteen-seventies) (Ang. 120, N^2)

Closely related to the above considerations is the question of folk-lore. The Anathemata contains several references to folk-life. Once again, it is interesting to notice that, whereas folk-life was seen in In Parenthesis in the process of a contemporary evolution, here it is important as part of the vestiges of the past. In the later work, occur the lines :

> ..... that old bonfire
> they've pulled
> for Summer Calend's tree. (Ang. 190)

The allusion is to a may-pole, but what is pertinent to the present discussion is the use of the phrase "Summer Calend's." Prefor M. Owen writes :

> According to the old Celtic mode of reckoning, summer began in May when the yearly rebirth of plant life was well under way. The first day of May, Calan Mai, was in former times also known by the name Calan Haf, the calends of summer, in the same way that the first of November, at the tail-end of autumn, was known as Calan Gaeaf, the winter calend.[61]

In the course of reading William F. Skene's Four Ancient Books, I came across the following line : "The Calends of winter, hard is the grain ..."[62] The Celtic usage is, of course, derived from the Latin Kalendae

---

61. Welsh Folk Customs, p.93.
62. The Four Ancient Books of Wales, I, 375.

'Kalendo.' So the phrase "Summer Caland's tree" carries the reader from modern folk-life back to the medieval Celtic world, and from there to Classical Roman times (Ang. 190, n[3]).

At this stage I should like to return briefly to Geoffrey of Monmouth. David Jones has written that the Arthurian cycle

> is in some ways, and so to say, an Ethnic-Amoid of the Celtic-Germano-Latin Christian medieval West. It may be recalled in this connection that Geoffrey of Monmouth appeared to imagine himself to be writing a kind of new Aeneid for the Angevin Empire.[63]

With In Parenthesis David Jones presented his version of modern heroic "poetry"; with The Anathemata, it is possible that he was attempting epic. In the United States there is a great interest in the idea of an "American epic," and many writers have composed long poems which attempt to capture the whole ethos of the people - works which take the country as hero and try to synthesize its historic past with its contemporary role. I think an analogy may be found here with David Jones' work.

The Anathemata is more, however, than a work which deals with the past. It is an examination of the author's attitude to the past as such. History, it may be said, is not in the context of time; time is in the context of eternity. As a Christian David Jones recognizes this distinction. Thus his whole work is not in the context of eternity. His concept of history is eschatological. There will be a

---

63. Epoch and Artist, p.204.

moment when time ceases and becomes one with the eternal. "In that day, *ymbe ealde* / when she, our West-Light falls from her track-way,/ *Hi ne mihten ille ofe.* /in their tremendous day" (*Ane.* 208). The Incarnation is seen as an invasion into time by the eternal : "Time is already big by ancient commerce with the timeless counsel" (*Ann.* 213). Finally,

> From before all time
> the New Light beams for them
> and with eternal election
> *infuleth* and affirmeth
> the Fore-times... (*Ann.* 73).

In other words, God is exterior even to geological time, and in the very processes of geology may be discovered the impress of his mind.

Having made this clear, it remains to be said that for the most part David Jones then proceeds to ignore eternity and to deal with the world as a temporal process. Thus his "Foretime," his "vorzeit-masque" (*Ann.* 63) is not some fabulous era of enchantments, but the pre-historic period. Similarly, when he comes to the Incarnation he emphasizes the historical aspect of the event :

> at the turn of time
> not at any time, but
> at this acceptable time (*Ann.* 50)

When he refers to the journey of Mary, the mother of Jesus, to her cousin Elizabeth, as being "but three months before the advent of the last Age of the World" (*Ann.* 212 and ff^2), he is reinforcing the medieval flavour of his work. Still he did sympathize with the view that

history falls into recognizable periods characterized by a peculiar culture. For example, he constantly refers to the twentieth century as "a late and complex phase of a phenomenally complex civilization,"[64] which echoes the terminology of Spengler. The Incarnation is seen as being "at the turn of time" (Ang. 98). R.G. Collingwood strongly criticized Spengler's cyclic theory of history, because he did not take sufficient account of the continuity of human progress, of the linear development from past into present.[65] David Jones avoids this error. Of the Incarnation he says "if there's continuity / here, there's a new beginning" (Ang. 91). He lays equal stress upon "the new beginning" and the "continuity." This allows him to combine a profoundly Christian interpretation of history, with a real appreciation of the historical process. As regards the latter, his whole thesis is that every new stage in history builds upon the one before, and that the present one is not a mere repetition of some preceding period, but the sum of the past.

As an artist, therefore, his difficulty was how to present a temporal process as the "sum" of itself without at the same time destroying the sense of movement. His answer was to resort to the device of "myth".[66] In a footnote to his Preface, David Jones forcefully states

---

64. Preface to The Anathemata, p.22.

65. See "Oswald Spengler and the Theory of Historical Cycles" (1927), in Essays in the Philosophy of History, ed. with intro. William Debbins (Austin, 1965).

66. In this section I am deeply indebted to ideas derived from a book by Martin Foss, Symbol and Metaphor in Human Experience (Lincoln, U.S.A., 1949).

that the idea of the fictitious need have no necessary connection with "myth."[67] In which case, history, if viewed from a certain angle and made to function in a specific way, could conceivably be "myth." If legend is the human extraordinary, and history the human reality, "myth" is normally a tale of origins set in a supernatural context. Therefore, to take, not the history of mankind, but the process of history itself, and elaborate it on the central figure of a story, the story of the origins of the present moment, is tantamount to creating a myth. This is what David Jones did. From a practical point of view this might prove unwieldy. Therefore, it was necessary to people his "myth" with "mythical" characters who would at one and the same time convey the weight of the whole process and also particularise it. The most important of these is the Lady of the Pool. Because she is more a process than a person, she is able to refer to and embody people and events which post-date her supposed existence :

> Don't cye me, captain
> don't cye me. 'tis but a try-out and very much botimes :
> For we live before her time. (Ann. 146)

Because she is a process given a particularised projection, she speaks with a cockney accent and discusses her lovers. Though I do not wish to become involved in a literary appraisal of The Anathemata, I should at least say that one point where David Jones does fall short of perfect achievement is just here. His Lady of the Pool is not sufficiently

---

67. Preface to The Anathemata, p.40, ff.

realized as a character, so that Section V tends to drag because of the weight of factual material contained in it.

Hardly anything has only one meaning for David Jones. In the following chapter I hope to elucidate his use of "myth" as a religious rather than as a literary term.

I do not intend to refer to every liturgical and scriptural reference in *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*, but merely to indicate briefly the way they are used in those two works, and to draw attention to cognate matters. In this context, "sacrifice" may be said to be the keyword of the earlier work; "sacrament", of the later one.

David Jones gives no footnote references to either the Bible or the liturgy until Part 5 of *In Parenthesis*. To rely on this statistical type of evidence would completely falsify the picture of the whole work, for right from the beginning of Part 1, the Catholic religion supplies metaphors in terms of which much of the story is told. The reader is informed that on the parade ground "the officer commanding is calling his Battalion by name - whose are the sheep are" (*In P.* 2). One suspects that there is little of the traditional relationship of shepherd to flock in the case of a general and his troops. This same metaphor takes on a different complexion when it is a question of Mr. Jenkins leading "his little flock, his armed bishopric, going with weary limbs" (*In P.* 51). Here is a vivid image of the relative helplessness of ordinary soldiers, and of the extent to which military discipline and the exigencies of the situation have reduced them to dependence upon their officers. When it comes, in Part 7, to a question of Mr. Jenkins' death, then one remembers that "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."[2]

---

2. John, x, 11 (A.V.).

There is a sense in which all the front-line fighters participate in the role of "good shepherd." Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd,"[2] and the Mass is, in Catholic doctrine, the ritual re-enactment of His sacrifice. In so far as the action of the story is either associated or identified with the celebration of the Mass, the men are Christ re-crucified in their generation. But there is no blasphemous attribution of divinity to man. Much of the power of the work derives from the tension between man's nature and the role he has to play.

The commands given to the battalion as it moves off are seen as if they were part of a liturgy. The commanding officer "continues the ritual words" (In P. 3). These produce that "concerted movement of arms in which the spoken word effected what it signified." A type of military transubstantiation has taken place. Finally, the troops move off leaving the parade ground deserted: "The liturgy of a regiment departing has been sung" (In P. 4). Coming so early in the narrative, these echoes appear as the inept application of a very serious and sacred rite to a very commonplace piece of military procedure. Though it should be remembered that David Jones had a high regard for the disciplined precision of the army, and that later events demonstrate how effective in time of stress this military quality can be. In any case, by Part 7, one is aware of the full significance of the parallel. There the men themselves are identified with the Host:

---

2. Loc. cit.

> But how intolerably bright the morning to those we who are
> alive and remain will lifted up, carried forward by an af-
> fective word. (In P. 165)

The implicit parallel is with the elevation of the Host. This is followed closely by the lines : "and the high grass sodden through your pattens / and dew sopongon the freshly dead" (In P. 164). For some of the men, at least, the act of sacrifice is already past, and the allusion is to the Mass of Interment : "When the Mass is ended the Priest... sprinkles the body... with holy water."[3]

Finally, the actual Passion of Christ is invoked. The title of Part 7, "The Five Unutterable Names," is derived, according to Jones's footnote, from Lewis Carroll's Hunting of the Snark.[4] The inference, that they also represent the five wounds of Christ, is unavoidable in the light of the various allusions in that final section to aspects of the Easter story. Very often in In Parenthesis the opening words of a section set the tone for the remainder of it. Here these have been composed from two different quotations. The first is,

> Invenimus eum in campis silvae
> and under every green tree. (In P. 153)

The Latin comes from Psalm cxxxii, 6 (A.V.),[5] and when translated gives the following reading : "we found it [him] in the fields of the wood /

---

3. I have composed this quotation from two rubrics in "The Mass of Interment," found in St. John's Missal for Every Day, rev. by the Very Rev. J. Canon Nea (Birmingham, 1963), pp.881, 882.

4. See In Parenthesis, Part 7, F[1], on p.220.

5. Ibid., Part 7, F[2], on p.220.

and under every green tree." The "him" referred to in Jones's context, is Abel. His co-relation with a later passage (In P. 162),[6] in which Abel is identified as the one who "conveyed dethe unto the grene tre," to use Malory's phrase.[7] His second allusion to him is preceded by a description of the fears of the men as they wait for the command to advance:

> Each one bearing in his body the whole apprehension of that innocent, on the day he saw his brother's votive smoke diffuse and hang to oust the fields of holocaust; neither approved nor satisfied nor made acceptable but lighted to everlasting partition. (In P. 162)

The sense of this piece is that each man's body is physically sensitive because of his fear of the potential hurt which that day's fratricidal conflict may inflict - a conflict which derives from the action of Cain towards his innocent brother. Cain's sacrifice was an "antithesis": it was "neither approved nor satisfied nor made acceptable," in which words the familiar formula of the Mass is negatived.[8] His sacrifice did not reconcile, but rather produced the "holocaust" of war, which leads to the "everlasting partition" of man from his fellow. Behind the word "partition" lurks the expected collocation of "partition" with "everlasting." Thus in the background there is all the significance which that phrase bears in Christian doctrine. David Jones never clearly formulates the question whether it is man himself

---

6. Ibid., Part 7, N[24], on p.223.
7. Vinaver's Malory, Book XVII, Chap. v, p.711.
8. Cf. The Anathemata, p.49.

who is responsible for the hell into which life often deteriorates. His energies are concentrated on how man copes, on how he attempts to redeem the situation.

The second part of the opening quotation is taken from the Passion for Good Friday.[9] This directly introduces the Passion of Christ. He was the one who came into the world, "that the world through him might be saved."[10] As is consonant with the idea of Good Friday, the emphasis in Part 7 is on the price of redemption rather than its victorious aspect. The various identifications made between Christ and the soldiers underline what has to be endured, the war that has to be fought in order to achieve victory. The soldiers have been drawn up ready to advance, and

> ...; this in the manner of their waiting :
> Those happy who had borne the yoke
> who kept their peace
> and those other in a like condemnation
> to the place of a skull. (In P. 154)

Hamish Wood in their Golgotha; the same vicissitudes await both saint and sinner. There is the poignancy of John Bell's "Gethsemane" experience : "you can't believe the cup won't pass from / or they won't make a better show / in the garden" (In P. 158). There is no reprieve. "So in the fullness of time" they advance, "and the world falls apart" (In P. 159).

In accordance with his practice throughout In Parenthesis, David

---

9. See In Parenthesis, Part 7, n^2, on p.220.
10. John, iii, 17 (A.V.).

Jones tries to present the mythological Christian sacrifice in a form consistent with the cultural traditions of his characters. For this purpose, he draws upon the modern study of anthropology, his main source being Sir J.G. Frazer. The Golden Bough contains this illuminating observation :

> In the great army of martyrs who in many ages and in many lands, not in Asia only, have died a cruel death in the characters of gods, the devout Christian will doubtless discern types and forerunners of the coming Saviour - stars that heralded in the morning sky the advent of the Sun of Righteousness - earthen vessels wherein it pleased the divine wisdom to set before hungering souls the bread of heaven.[11]

It would be wrong to claim definitively that this is David Jones's attitude. His concern in In Parenthesis is to illustrate with parallels from the past the situation of his contemporaries. Such reference adds a further dimension to his modern protagonists, and does not necessarily assert anything more as to those past examples other than that there is no new thing under the sun. What Sir James Frazer's statement does provide is a justification of the introduction of reference to pagan ritual in the context of the Catholic liturgy. That scholar ranges from the ritual explication of Classical myth to the interpretation of primitive customs among peoples contemporary with him. From this vast choice, David Jones selected those points which

---

11. The Scapegoat, Part VI of The Golden Bough, 3rd. ed. (London, 1913-15), p.422.

could be fitted into the medieval framework of his Heroic Age. This is the reason for the use of Old Norse parallels to the Pantheon. They are used specifically by the author to represent the Germans. Thus at the end of the whole work it is said of the "Queen of the Woods" that "For Balder she reaches high to fetch his garland (In P. 195). Among names such as "Lilywhite" and "Billy Grower," that god's name clearly represents a dead German. In Part 4 the author's associative faculty moves rapidly from a description of shell blasted trees to the thought of the northern god, Odin; and from him to the enemy troops, the descendants of his worshippers

> His eyes turned again to where the wood thinned to separate
> broken trees; to where great chippings-off hanged from ten-
> uous fibres swaying, whitened to decay - as many
> immolations
> for the northern Cybele.
> The hanged, the offerant -
> himself to himself
> on the tree.
> Whose own,
> whose grey war-bend, beyond the stepled war-net -
> (as grey-banded sodents for a shelving warren - scooped in
> their complex runnels, where the sea-feet percolates). (In P.67)

Sir James Frazer writes that at the spring festival of Cybele, the priest representing Attis would be hanged from the sacred tree.[12] A similar sacrifice in the north was offered to Odin. However, the latter was

---

12. Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Part IV of The Golden Bough, I, 203.

also said

> to have been sacrificed to himself ... as we learn from the varied verses of the Havamal, in which the god describes how he acquired his divine power by learning the magic runes:
>
> "I know that I hung on the windy tree
> For nine whole nights,
> Wounded with the spear dedicated to Odin,
> Myself to myself."[13]

This is a remarkable parallel to a reference made by Maurice de la Taille to "the Cross, on which offered by Himself Christ died."[14] (A paraphrase of the Havamal lines intended of Christ in Session VIII of The Anathemata).[15]

The most famous northern example of the "dying god" was Baldur. He was killed by a piece of mistletoe. Frazer associates mistletoe with the classical "Golden Bough," or branch of the sacred tree which had to be plucked in order to permit a person to contest in mortal combat with the incumbent of the office for the priesthood of the god.[16] Therefore the presentation to the priest of the "Golden Bough" often heralded his death. Mistletoe, itself, was believed to be the physical embodiment of the god. When thunder struck a tree, especially an oak, the virtue of the sky-god passed into the tree and became manifest as mistletoe. To pluck this was to deprive the tree of its

---

13. Ibid., p.290. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, V[35], on p.204.
14. The Mystery of Faith (London, 1941), pp.136-137.
15. See The Anathemata, p.225, and N[1].
16. Baldur the Beautiful, Part VII of The Golden Bough, II, 204-285.

divinity.[17] This is the complex of ideas behind the following description of the battle scene at Mametz Wood :

> Fetz Balder falleth everywhere
> and thunder-beech breakings
> bright the wood
> and a Golden Bough for
> Johnny and Jack
> and blasted oaks for Jenny... (In P. 177-178).[18]

Balder or his priests are the sacrifice. They are the soldiers who are being shot down. A "thunder-beech" is the thunder-induced electrocution; so that the "thunder-beech breakings" which "bright the wood" are flaxen stabs of gun-fire. These are equivalent to the plucking of the "Golden Bough" which was always followed by a death. "Johnny and Jack" receive the "Golden Bough" because they are doomed to die. Oak trees struck by lightning were supposed to have been visited by the sky-god and were accordingly revered. As far as the Germans are concerned the "blasted oaks" intimate, not the presence of a god, but the advance of the Allies. Their fate is foreshadowed in that of the trees. Mametz Wood, itself, has already been pictured as a sacred grove, such as that at Uppsala dedicated to Odin.[19] As the troops advanced, mention was made of how "the gradient rose more flatly toward the separate sacred saplings, where they make fringe for the interior thicket" (In P. 165).

---

17. Ibid., pp.299-301.
18. See *In Parenthesis*, Part 7, [29], on p.223.
19. See Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, I, 289-290.

This strong emphasis upon trees connects the myths of Odin and Baldur with the story of Cain and Abel. Basing his description upon a passage in Malory's Tale of the Sankgreal,[20] David Jones writes of Abel as one who, "under the green tree / had awareness of his dismembering, and deep-bevelled damage; for whom the green tree bore scarlet memorial, and herb and arbourage waste" (In P. 162). Here the catastrophe which produced the Wasteland is identified with the original fratricide. In Part 4 the Wasteland theme is connected with the idea of scapegoats, of which the most important type was that of the "dying god."[21] The front-line fighters are described as "appointed scapegoats come to the waste-lands" (In P. 70).[22] This theme of the Wasteland has already been treated in respect of the physical impact of a scene of desolation.[23] The spiritual significance of it is conveyed more in terms of the liturgical and anthropological metaphors so far discussed. On the other hand, The Anathemata makes considerable use of that theme's Christian symbolism. In "Shortwaydays and Venus Day," the redemptive act of Christ on Calvary is spoken of in terms of the story of Perceval, the Grail hero.

> Grown in stature
> he knows the waters.
> * * * *

---

20. See Vinaver's Malory, Book XVII, Chap. v, p.711.
21. See Frazer, The Scapegoat, Part VI of The Golden Bough, pp.226-227.
22. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, P[25], on p.206.
23. See above, p.53.

Unless he ask the question
how shall the rivers run
or the suitors persuade their lover
or the occasion of the land cease?
What more should he do
that he hasn't done?
His dispositions made
he would at once begin the action.
He has begun it
here
within the camp
see
he takes the auguries
Now also the dawn deployment?
What shapes also the quarter-less contest
at the mound? (Ann. 225-226)

David Jones bases part of this passage on the story of Peredur, the Welsh Grail hero.[24] This is consistent with his desire to set his ideas in a framework of national consciousness. Nevertheless, it is to Jessie L. Weston's book, From Ritual to Romance, that he is primarily indebted. There he found analyses of the various Grail stories. The task of the hero was to restore the fertility of the Wasteland. To accomplish this he had to ask a question either as to the nature of the Grail, or as to whom it served. Dr. Weston associates the tale with Nature Cults, and traces the theme of the "Fisher of the Waters" back into the antiquity of the Assyrian race.[25] David Jones, though

---

24. See The Anathemata, p.200, n[1(c)]; p.225, n[2]; p.226, n[1].
25. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957 (first publ. Cambridge, 1920), p.26.

aware of this ritualistic interpretation, stresses the spiritual symbolism of the tale. For him, the question of the Grail hero is not asked by Christ, but asked by him on the Cross. The reference to Him taking "the cup-urion" is a figurative way of describing the Last Supper which, as Maurice de Taille emphasises, was inseparably part of one single act of Redemption.[26]

The continual fusion of pagan myth with Christian material is justified given the historical perspective of David Jones. For many festivals of the Church are but Christianised versions of pagan customs. Christopher Dawson has written :

> It was only with difficulty that the Church succeeded in putting down the old pagan customs, and it was usually done by providing a Christian ceremony to take the place of the heathen one.[27]

The most famous example of this is Christmas. In Parentheses takes note of this transformation in the following passage :

> It was yet quite early in the morning, at the time of Saturnalia, when men properly are in winter quarters, lighting the birthday candles - (In P. 65)

After the association of Odin with the German troops[28] come these lines :

> And one played on an accordion :
> "Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen
> Aus einer Wurzel zart."
> Since Boniface once walked in Odin's wood (In P. 67)

---

26. The History of Faith, pp.136-137.
27. The Making of Europe, p.160.
28. See above, p.51.

Boniface was the "Apostle of Germany."[29]

> With the help of his Anglo-Saxon monks and nuns he destroyed the last strongholds of Germanic heathenism and planted abbeys and bishoprics on the sites of the old folkburgs and heathen sanctuaries ....[30]

Such observations are used in In Memoriam to add to the characterization of the two opposing forces. Despite their hostility, from an historical point of view they ought to have been Christian brothers, having both graduated from paganism to that religion. In The Anathemata the emphasis is upon the last vestiges of the former paganism, as these survive in folk-custom. Thus in "Robinog's Liturgy", the season is indicated by saying that "if the judgmable snakes of autumn seemed remote John's Fires were lit and dead" (Ana. 197). The second line may be understood in the light of a statement made by Frazer. He said that from time immemorial fires were lit all over Europe either on Midsummer Eve or Midsummer Day. These fires were a part of the primitive Nature Cults then prevalent. "A faint tinge of Christianity has been given to them by naming Midsummer Day after St. John the Baptist...."[31] However, what The Anathemata tends mainly to emphasize is the relationship of the religion of Classical antiquity to Christianity.

The Anathemata goes much further than In Memoriam in its attempt to integrate the various strands in the cultural heritage of the author.

---

29. Dawson, Making of Europe, p.266.
30. Dawson, p.267.
31. Frazer, Baldur the Beautiful, II, 160.

Instead of treating the matter at a largely functional level, the later work tries to embody in itself a theoretical principle justifying the attempt at integration. By his title, David Jones claims to mean

> the blessed things that have taken on what is owned and the profane things that somehow are redeemed ... things, or some aspect of them, that partake of the extra-utile and of the gratuitous; things that are the signs of something other, together with those signs that not only have the nature of a sign, but are themselves, under some mode, what they signify. Things set up, lifted up, or in whatever manner made over to the gods.[32]

The whole work may be seen as a commentary upon this passage; and a reliable guide as to the interpretation of the work is to be found in its own basic structure.

It begins with the celebration of Mass, more precisely, at the Prayer of Consecration,[33] that prayer by which the priest dedicates the bread and wine to the Lord and in the presence of which those elements become His body and blood. It ends at the same stage in the Mass: "Here, in this high place / into both hands / he takes the steamed dish" (Ann. 242). The inference is that all that has been crowded into the intervening pages has, in fact, been offered up and consecrated like the host.

The point which the author, in various writings, elaborates is the fact that not only is the Eucharist, the Sacrament, but that any "ant-

---

32. Preface to The Anathemata, pp.28-29.

33. See The Anathemata, p.49, ff.

Leflo" work is also a "sacrament."[34] Before trying to elucidate his eucharistic theory, it is necessary to grasp the essentials of the Eucharistic interpretation to which he adhered. His views were formed to a considerable extent under the influence of Maurice de La Taille's The Mystery of Faith.[35] St. Augustine said : "Sacrifice... is the visible sacrament of the invisible sacrifice, that is, it is a sacred sign."[36] The comment of M. de La Taille is :

> This implies two elements : a sign, and a thing signified. Our internal surrender is that is signified; the sign which signifies it is the thing made sacred, that is the gift which we offer.[37]

From this exposition one can make the following generalization : a "sacrament" is a physical symbol of a spiritual condition. St. Thomas Aquinas writes :

> Now because it was connatural for man to acquire knowledge through the senses, and most difficult for him to transcend sensible things.... sensible sacrifices were instituted; these sacrifices men offers to God, not that God has need for them, but that man should be given to understand that he is under obligation to refer himself and all he has to God, as to an end, and as to the Creator, Lord and Ruler of the Universe.[38]

---

34. Enoch and Arvisu, p.155 et passim.
35. See the Preface to The Anathemata, p.37, and n[1].
36. Quoted by Maurice de La Taille in The Mystery of Faith, p.7.
37. La Taille, pp.7-8.
38. Quoted by La Taille, pp.3-4.

From this one can deduce that a sacrament is a physical sign indicative of the fact that man has an ultimate non-physical end, namely God. That the sacrament itself is physical is contingent upon the nature of man. David Jones adopted this theological position to his own aesthetic views. In doing so, he was guided by Jacques Maritain's Art and Scholasticism which was first published in an English translation in 1923 at Eric Gill's community at Ditchling under the title, The Philosophy of Art. It is difficult for the student to disentangle Maritain from, say, Aquinas, in the thought of David Jones, and I shall not seriously attempt the task here.

Following the medieval Schoolmen, David Jones assumes that man is a rational animal. On the basis of this premise he makes two major claims : "it is here supposed that man is a creature whose end is extra-mundane and whose nature is to make things."[39] Man is not bound by a mechanical determinism, such as is found operative in the reflexes of the other animals. Reason bestows upon man a freedom which necessitates that he should have "an end other than that of the other animals," in fact, "a supernatural end."[40] This finds expression in the production of artifacts which "are not only things of mundane requirement but are of necessity the signs of something other."[41] This is consonant with the statement of Aquinas that, "reason is the first principle of

---

39. Epoch and Artist, p.150.
40. Ibid., p.147.
41. Ibid., p.150.

all human work."[42] Because the artefacts of man are signalised by having an "extra-mundane" end, they cannot be said to be merely functional. Maritain writes that,

> the virtue of art... whatever other end it may serve, shall by itself aim only at the perfection of the work and suffer no control over the work which does not come through it.[43]

He defines this quality as "the gratuitousness of art."[44] This non-utilitarian, this "gratuitous,"[45] element in art is what defines it as a "sacrament." In varying degrees, works of art materially embody man's rationality, man's desire to achieve in the work the perfection of the work for its own sake, and ultimately, man's consciousness of a "supernatural end."

David Jones differs from Jacques Maritain in that where the latter distinguishes clearly between the artisan and the artist, Jones does not. Maritain said,

> to create, to produce something intellectually, to manufacture an object rationally constructed, is a very considerable achievement in the world : in itself, for man, a way of imitating God. And here I mean art in general, as the Ancients understood it, the virtue of the artisan.[46]

---

42. Quoted by Jacques Maritain in Art and Scholasticism with Other Essays (London, 1932 [first publ. 1930]), ftn9 to p.31.

43. Maritain, "An Essay on Art," in Art and Scholasticism, p.120. I do not know whether Jones ever read this essay or not. It is very probable that he did. However, the ideas contained in it are essentially just an elaboration of those already propounded in Art and Scholasticism itself.

44. Maritain, loc. cit.

45. Epoch and Artist, p.148 et passim.

46. Maritain, "An Essay on Art," pp.123-124.

But he continues,

> where especially the maker of works becomes an imitator of God, where the virtue of art attains the nobility of absolute and self-sufficient things, is in that group of arts which by itself constitutes a whole spiritual world, namely the Fine Arts.... whatever be the nature and the ends in usefulness of the art under consideration, by its object it participated in something superhuman : for its object is the creation of beauty.[47]

The ancients did not isolate the Fine Arts as a species of Art, or to use Jones's favourite term, of "Ars."[48] Similarly, Maritain says of the Middle Ages :

> Not in Phidias and Praxiteles only, but in the village carpenter and blacksmith as well, the Schoolmen acknowledged an intrinsic development of reason, a nobility of mind.[49]

So David Jones approved the search by Eric Gill to find a "principle of unity" which would embrace both "poetry-cook" and "portrait painter."[50] Towards the end of his essay, "Art and Sacrament," Jones wrote :

> I have already greatly exceeded the number of words proposed for this essay and have done no more than indicate the nature of Ars as instanced in : strategy, a birthday-cake, a religious site and a well-known picture.[51]

Jones is able to treat these various objects and activities alike, as

---

47. Maritain, p.124.
48. Bosch and Artist, p.149 et passim.
49. Art and Scholasticism, p.20.
50. Bosch and Artist, p.302.
51. Ibid., p.175.

it is the lowest common denominator in any "art-work" upon which he lays stress. He writes : "it is an abstract quality, however hidden or devious, which determines the real worth of any work."[52] This claim is made more explicit in a passage such as the following :

> it is the "abstract" quality in any painting (no matter how "realistic") that causes that painting to have "being," and which alone gives it the right to be claimed as art-work, as a making, as poiesis, along with the triple spiral in the New Grange tumulus, Palestrina's music for the Missa-puris, the columns of the Parthenon, the arranged dimmles of Julia's love-knot, the taut hemp for a tackle, any lit-urgical act, or the thatching of a roof.[53]

Of this "abstract quality," Jones says : "The one common factor im-plicit in all the arts of man resides in a certain juxtaposing of forms."[54] This comes very close to St. Thomas Aquinas' definition of "beauty" and "beauty" according to Maritain is the end of the Fine Arts. Aquinas wrote :

> For beauty three things are requisite. In the first place, integrity or perfection, for whatsoever things are imperfect, by that very fact are ugly; and due proportion or consonance; and again effulgence : so bright coloured objects are said to be beautiful.[55]

Therefore, for David Jones, a work of art is the material embodiment of a formal excellence common to the whole of "Art." The finished article

---

52. Ibid., p.265.
53. Ibid., p.172.
54. Ibid., p.265.
55. Quoted by Maritain in Art and Scholasticism, N[49], to p.24.

signifies the informing principle, so it is a "monument."

There is an interesting passage in the "Middle-age and Less-age" section of The Anathemata where it is said that an achievement similar to that of the Greeks in sculpture will not again be realised till the Middle Ages, "till the splendour formarum / when, under West-light / the word is made stone" (Ana. 95). A footnote (Ana. 95, n[1]) refers one to

> the technical term splendor formae used of Beauty in Thomist philosophy. I borrow the terminology to use it analogously and in a non-philosophical, everyday sense and in the plural, of those visible "forms" or art-works, which, after all, derive their outward "splendours" from the forma, i.e. the unseen informing principle, referred to in the technical language of the definition.

In view of this statement, it is clear that David Jones's natural predilection is to deal with the way in which the "abstract quality" in a work of art "is apprehended in the sensible and by the sensible."[56] This accounts for his emphasis upon craftsmanship, for his concern with the way the artist handles "the sensible," handles his material.[57]

---

56. Maritain, p.29.

57. Jones's interest in craftsmanship may be easily detected even in In Parenthesis where he talks of the "German trench system" being "better builded" than that of the Allies (Part 3, n[1], on pp.199-200). In Part 6 (page 140) he describes with obvious admiration how "awfully well made" were the German trenches. A very important influence upon Jones's ideas as regards craftsmanship was Eric Gill. Jones stayed at the latter's community at Ditchling Common from 1921 to 1924. Subsequently, he spent considerable periods with Eric Gill. While at Ditchling Common he apprenticed himself as a carpenter to George Maxwell. This experience may have encouraged Jones's stress upon the importance of the medium in which an art is carried on.

Starting from a position similar to that of Aquinas' definition of "beauty," David Jones shows how an activity, such as "strategy partakes of Art."[58]

> I argue that it does partake of art because war-as-strategist is concerned with a positioning, and so a juxtaposing, of certain several parts with a view to establishing a certain whole.[59]

Still, it can be distinguished from the "art of poetry"[60] which "partakes of Art" in a different way. Consistent with the whole trend of his thought, is the basis upon which Jones makes this distinction. It is not the "end" of "poetry" which defines it, but the materials it uses. The passage which makes this clear occurs in the Preface to The Anathemata. It is as near as Jones ever gets to a definition of the "Fine Arts," as distinct from crafts and skills.

> The forms and materials which the poet uses, his images and the meanings he would give to those images, his perceptions, what is evoked, invoked or incanted, is in some way or other, to some degree or other, essentially bound up with the particular historic complex to which he, together with each other member of that complex, belongs. But, for the most, the woof and warp, the texture, feel, ethos, the whole matière comprising that complex communion also, or in part comprises, the actual material of his art. The "arts" of, e.g., the strategist, the plumber, the philosopher, the physicist, are no

---

58. Epoch and Artist, p.159.
59. Loc. cit.
60. Preface to The Anathemata, p.19.

> doubt, like the art of the poet, conditioned by and reflective of the particular cultural complex to which their practitioners belong, but neither of those four arts, with respect to their several genres, can be said to be occupied with the embodiment and expression of the mythus and deposits comprising that cultural complex.[61]

The material of the "poet" is the "whole zog"[62] which comprises the cultural heritage of the writer, which comprises both the tradition and his place in it. This is consistent with a remark of Maritain's : "the most universal and most human works of art are those which bear most openly the mark of their country."[63] Jones, himself, repeatedly lays stress on the importance of "site, place, locality, racial and cultural ties and all the rest,"[64] in the work of a "poet." The catholicity of his interest in his own heritage is evidenced in the explanation he gives of the title of The Anathemata : by it he implies both "the blessed things that have taken on what is cursed and the profane things that somehow are redeemed."[65]

While he constantly acknowledges the "abstract quality" as the primary element in a work of art, David Jones does stress the objective reality of the finished product. It should be unambiguously characteristic of the branch of "Arts" which produced it. Moreover, it should be inseparably related to the material from which it has been formed.

---

61. Loc. cit. Italics, partly mine, partly Jones's.
62. Ibid., p.36.
63. Art and Scholasticism, p.79.
64. Epoch and Artist, p.16.
65. Preface to The Anathemata, pp.28-29.

For this peculiar objective quality of any product, Jones uses the term "haecceitas, 'thisness,' associated with John Duns the Scot and his principle of individuation" (Ann. 140, n[4]). Therefore, a "poet" in composing a "poem" imparts to it individuality, or "thisness," in so far as he impresses his own nature upon it, and the nature of the tradition to which he himself belongs. This being the case, Jones says,

> I think we can assert that the poet is a "remembrancer" and that it is a part of his "business to keep open the lines of communication. One obvious way of doing this is by handing on such fragmented bits of our own inheritance as we have ourselves received.[66]

An obvious aspect of the past to remember in order to preserve for the future is the history of man's efforts as an artist, as a producer of "artefacts,"[67] or, to use Jones's own peculiar terminology, as a "sacramental animal."[68] Thus "Rite and Narrative" alludes to the first examples of visual art which, in 1940, were considered to date from about 20,000 B.C. (Ann. 59, n[3]). The author refers to the person "whose man-hands god-handled the Willendorf stone" (Ann. 59). This recalls Maritain's statement, that "to create, to produce something intellectually, to manufacture an object rationally constructed, is... in itself, for man, a way of imitating God."[69] Jones, himself, says of products such as the "Willendorf stone," "we would appear already to be in the domain

---

66. Epoch and Artist, p.141.
67. Preface to The Anathemata, p.29.
68. Epoch and Artist, p.155.
69. Maritain, "An Essay on Art," pp.123-124.

of sign (sacrament), of anamnesis, of anathemata."[70]

This returns one to the Mass, for it is the task of the "poet" to "show forth, recall, discover, and re-present those things that have belonged to man from the beginning."[71] Essentially, and in a superlative degree, this also is the function of the Mass. This central rite of the Church recalls the redemptive sacrifice of Christ. This act of Redemption has "belonged to man from the beginning" because "the Lamb [was] slain / ab origine mundi" (Ano. 208). Christ, Himself, instituted the rite when he said, "Do this for an anamnesis of me."[72] David Jones adopts Gregory Dix's definition of "anamnesis" :

> in the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament anamnesis and the cognate verb have a sense of "recalling" or "re-presenting" before God an event in the past so that it becomes here and now operative by its effects (Ano. 205, N[1])

"Poetry," by "recalling" and "re-presenting" the cultural heritage of the author, actualizes it in the present for the reader. Even as the Mass uses "sensible" or material objects to signify its spiritual truth, so "poetry" uses "sensible" or material imagery to convey its "abstract quality." But the Mass does not employ the raw materials, flour and grapes, for its symbols. Rather, it uses the artefacts of man, bread and wine.[73] Here David Jones moves closer to the analogy of the Mass.

---

70. Epoch and Artist, p.156.
71. Ibid., p.140.
72. Quoted in Epoch and Artist, p.170.
73. Preface to The Anathemata, pp.30-31.

in The Anathemata, then perhaps is normal in "poetry." For he recalls not simply man's sensory impressions, but artefacts already produced by man such as the "Willendorf steno." He offers the cultural heritage of mankind as represented at the present time in himself with all his local ties, to those who share and are a part of that same cultural heritage. One remembers, in this connection, that on the Cross Christ offered Himself to Himself.[74] In the Mass the priest offers to God under the forms of bread and wine His own body and blood. So, in a sense, The Anathemata is offered to itself. Moreover, the Mass is one of "those signs that not only have the nature of a sign, but are themselves under some mode, what they signify."[75] The bread and wine not only signify the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood, but in the process of the Consecration they really become that body and that blood. The Anathemata not only tries to present to the reader a theory of art in which an artefact is apprehended as a "sacrament" or a sign "of something other,"[76] but according to the principle which it adopts it also is a "sacrament" in itself.

With In Parenthesis the sacrificial aspect of the Mass was predominant. The Liturgy was used as a supreme analogy to the 1914-1918 situation. With The Anathemata the sacramental character of the Mass is primary. What is central in the work is less that which is symbolled than the symbolic process itself. The work which is a "sacrament"

---

74. See Maurice de la Taille, The Mystery of Faith, p.137.
75. Preface to The Anathemata, p.29.
76. Loc. cit.

is set in the context of the Sacrament; a work of religious art is, as it were, put in perspective by being apprehended in the context of "the Liturgy, the transcendent, supernatural type of Christian art-forms."[77] David Jones suggested that The Anathemata was an account of a person's stream of consciousness "in the time of the Mass."[78] I feel that the relationship he intended to that rite was even more integral and profound.

77. Maritain, Art and Scholasticism, p.71.

78. Quoted in the Preface to The Anathemata, p.31. Cf. The Anathemata p.156, ¶4.

From what has been said in the last two chapters, it will probably be clear by now that "medievalism," while an important aspect of The Anathemata, is scarcely adequate as a key to its ultimate significance. "Medievalism" is much more central to In Parenthesis. There the two important factors are the present time and its analogies with the Middle Ages, whether the latter be apprehended as the world of Heroic literature, of pagan mythology, or of the Catholic tradition. The fundamental question, therefore, is how successfully these two aspects concord.

At a first reading In Parenthesis may leave one with the impression that it is "great comedy." A second reading, placing due emphasis upon the allusions to the past as has been the almost exclusive practice in this study so far, may create an impression of tragedy. Neither view, of course, is sufficiently comprehensive. The work is about a struggle to retain sanity in the midst of the most unpropossessing of circumstances; and sanity does triumph in the end. To criticise the work as sentimental is to misconceive its whole import; it is also to dismiss a large and important facet of the human psyche. Most great writing has a nostalgic, an elegiac quality. Literature deals with transcendentals in terms of the transitory. This cannot but evoke a response in the writer. His object is not to legislate for the present, nor prophesy of the future, but to interpret the pass-

ing experience, his own and the world's. Moreover, much that is now allocated to the "sentimental" faculty, was once considered the property of the transfiguring power of the imagination.

As one would expect, David Jones found the environment of trench warfare utterly alien. Not to accept this is to render his whole fabric of allusion meaningless; as happens to the concept of salvation divorced from that of original sin. The whole business of war is foreign to the characters in his story. A footnote deprecates those training programmes planned to foster hatred of the enemy, to stimulate the instinct to kill.[1] Like most other combatant writers of the time, David Jones shows no hostility to the enemy. Placed in harsh physical surroundings, with a task repulsive in the extreme to perform, a man's natural instinct is to find a mode of escape. Faced with this type of situation, the artist, in so far as he is a good one, will resist the temptation to escape, and will try rather to achieve a deeper and more comprehensive vision of his circumstances. This will frequently take the form of discovering an order inherent in the situation - an order unperceived by people of lesser sensibility. Closely linked with this idea of order is that of an enduring system of values. Often, in fact, it is the discovery of the latter which allows one to find a way of harmonising the disparate elements of experience. Speaking in general, for the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth, the favourite retreat was to a paradise of nature. The countryside sym-

---

1. In Parenthesis, Part 6, V[12], on p.219.

bolined for them a system of enduring values, upon the basis of which they could assess the rest of their experience. Kathleen Raine discusses the relationship of Blake and D.H. Lawrence to this tradition.[2] Henri Bergson, writing of the perturbation of spirit, the disruption of physical well-being, to which man is liable, says :

> The rest of nature goes on its expanding course in absolute tranquillity. Although plants and animals are the sport of chance, they rely on the passing hour as they would on eternity. We drink in something of this unshakable confidence during a country walk, from which we return quieted and soothed.[3]

But fighting in the trenches was no stroll in the country. Thus, though David Jones was peculiarly sensitive to landscape, he was unable to find in the countryside a sufficient counterpoise to the vicissitudes of war. As Earle H. Swank has pointed out, part of the explanation for Jones's return to the past may be the unsatisfactory character of the natural scene.[4] It is with his attitude to the latter that I wish to deal first.

The soldiers had taken up residence in "a bad country," "where men from their first habitation had not to rest, but to always dyke and drain if they would outwit the water or leave the place to fowl and amphibious beasts" (In P. 88). They meet the "warden of stores," a man who is "thickly grayed with mud so that his boots and puttees and sand-

---

2. William Blake, Writers and Their Work Series (London, 1951 [rev.ed. 1965]), p.8.

3. Morality and Religion (London, 1935), p.174.

4. "David Michael Jones: In Parenthesis," in Lectures on Modern Novelists, Carnegie Series in English, No. 7 (Pittsburgh, 1963), pp. 71-72.

-ing tie-ons were become one whole of twisting colour" (In P. 90).

> They wondered how long a time it took to become so knit with the texture of this countryside, so germane to the stuff about, so moulded by, made proper to, the special environment dictated by a stationary war. (In P. 91)

Their elemental environment is composed of mud and rain. Moreover, as first impressions are often the most crucial, the especial wetness of that first winter must have indelibly fixed itself in the memory of raw recruits such as John Bell, and coloured all their subsequent impressions. The rebuff offered by the paradise of nature in terms of its utter inhospitality is not the worst of the matter. Nature is not simply hostile, in fact, it may not be hostile at all. Nevertheless, it is useless to turn to it for consolation, for nature too is a victim of the holocaust of war. The men are moving forward to the front. Suddenly,

> Field-battery flashing showed the nature of the place the kindlier night had hid ; the tufted avenue denuded, lopt, deprived of height; stripped stumps for flowering limbs - this discontent makes winter's rasure acceptable and kind. (In P. 30)

The natural decay which seasonal change produces in trees is not remotely comparable with the butchery they have suffered from the destructive devices of men. In them John Bell may see mirrored his own and the condition of his fellows. Nature is symbolic, but not of a paradise, rather of the inferno of 1914-18. Trees cannot, however, adjust to their situation with the flexibility of rational man. He is equipped with imaginative powers which can transfigure a scene;

just as, in the midst of horror, he is able to appreciate the beauty of moonshine :

> The rain stopped.
> The driven swift and immaculate out over, free of those
> obscuring vapours: frets their fringes splendid.
> A silver hurrying to silver this waste
> silver for bolt-shoulders
> silver for butt-heel-irons
> . . . . .
> silver-trace a festooned slack; fuzzy-bright a filigree
> with gooseberries and picket-irons - grace this mauled earth -
> transfigure our infirmity -
> shine on us. (In P. 34-35)

Because certain aspects of reality are grim and sordid is no excuse for not seeing and appreciating the moon. Not to do so is to abdicate one's right to be considered a fully rational creature. When John Bell sees no-man's land in terms of Malory or of old Welsh literature, he is not being sentimental. He is transfiguring "this mauled earth." He is seeing not only with the eye, but "thro' the Eye,"[5] catching a glimpse of the eternal. According to Jacques Maritain's reduction of Scholastic theory : God is Being. Beauty is an aspect of Being. Therefore, God "is beauty itself, because He imparts beauty to all beings, according to the peculiar nature of each, and because He is the cause of all harmony and brightness."[6] St. Thomas Aquinas said that, "the beauty of

---

5. William Blake, Auguries of Innocence, line 126.
6. Maritain, Art and Scholasticism, p.31.

the creature is nothing but a similitude of the divine beauty shared among things."[7] Maritain, continuing to paraphrase, writes :

> to say with the Schoolmen that beauty is the splendour of form shining on the proportioned parts of matter is to say that it is a lightning of the mind on a matter intelligently arranged.[8]

Literary memories lend a vicarious proportion or arrangement to the chaos of the front. The mind grasps this, and a transient vision of the beautiful is apprehended. Momentarily, God has been seen in the very arena of war. Nevertheless, though the process is valid, it is only in the memory that it can endure. Therefore, David Jones strove in his work to find some other way of bringing nature and man back into communion. He succeeded by postulating a sympathetic bond between the two.

> Across the very quiet of no-man's-land came still some twittering. He found the wood, visually so near, yet for the foot forbidden by a great fixed gulf, a sight somehow to powerfully hold his mind. So the woods of all the world in this potency - to move the bowels of us. (In P. 66)

These trees growing together, this wood, have a strange hold upon John Ball. He associates them with schoolboys and lovers, with the guilt-frenzied Lancelot and the grief-stricken Merlin, and finally with racial memories of his Aryan ancestors in the primeval forests of Europe.[9] The

---

7. Quoted by Maritain, loc. cit.
8. Maritain, p.25.
9. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, ll[12], on pp.203-204.

wood does not constitute a paradise, nor is it alien. It shares with man in his varied and stormy experience. In Part 7, Mametz Wood emerges as a character in its own right, a character whose aspect and behaviour are closely associated with that of the soldiers. The Wood suffers injury even as men do :

> at the margin / struggle tangled oak and frayed sheeny beech-bole, and fragile / birch whose silver queenery is dreggled and ungraced / and June shoots lopt / and fresh stalks bled (In P. 165)

A little later in the action men and the flora of the Wood are inextricably confused in the welter of destruction : concealed enemy guns

> stammer a level traversing / and get a woeful cross-section on / stamen-twined and bruised pistillino / steel-shorn of style and ovary / leaf and blossoming / with flora-spangled khaki pelvises (In P. 170)

An even more revealing passage follows : "The trees are very high in the wan signal-beam, for whose slow gyration their wounded boughs seem as malignant limbs, manoeuvring for advantage" (In P. 164). So battered men in the artificial light of gunfire do not appear the wounded, pathetic creatures they are, but rather as fierce enemies trying to outwit each other. In wartime friend and foe have a totally distorted picture of one another. The only reconciliation which comes within the compass of the work is that accomplished by the "Queen of the Woods," personifying the woodland countryside. In her distribution of foliage and floral decorations to the dead, she makes no distinction of German or Britisher, of private or officer. This denies to honour, and in-

partiality in doing so, could at that time be correctly claimed for man. Otherwise there would have been no war, no agony of destruction. The woods which have shared man's sorrows with him, finally emerge as superior to his animosities. They stand for an order which is other than man, and in which man, though dead, at least rest in peace. There is a suggestion that the "Queen of the Woods" may be death itself under the form of the particular environment, or even the Virgin Mary representing her Son, as one who "can choose twelve gentlemen" (In P. 185).

But, in the passage quoted earlier about the moon, not only was an appeal made to it to "grace this mauled earth," but also to "transfigure our infirmity." If nature is only a retreat in so far as it exhibits a sympathy with man, then one is necessarily returned to the study of mankind. It was only at the end, and even then only in relation to those who were already dead, that nature emerged as a power distinct from the complications of human life. Thus, David Jones was forced to find his system of enduring values that would order his experience, not in the realm of nature, but in the activity of man. It was at this stage that he turned towards the past. His basic technique is to associate the soldiers of the 1914-18 War with the heroes of the vernacular literatures of the early Middle Ages. He thereby suggests a standard of heroic action whereby to judge the deeds of his contemporaries. One very real danger of this is the fact that it is not the history of the Heroic Age but its literature upon which he bases his picture of it. In the literature the spirit of the age was distilled and concentrated. A stylised conception of the Heroic was

embodied in it, which may have been at considerable variance with the actual exigencies of the situation. Therefore, in a passage such as that about "the speckled kite of Maldon" (In P. 54), David Jones emphasises that however heroic his soldiers may be they have none of the conventional glamour of heroic characters, nor are their surroundings free from the mundane inconveniences which are carefully omitted in Heroic poetry. The result is a tension between a desire to do justice to the heroism of the men, and yet to retain a firm grip upon reality. This fuses with a similar tension between man as a fallen creature and his role as a scapegoat. The obscenity and the glory, the whole paradox, is formulated in a vivid juxtaposition descriptive of men : they are "dung-making Holy Ghost temples" (In P. 45).

One way in which David Jones resolves the tension is by carefully discovering where in actual fact the heroism of his characters is to be located. After the passage in which he demonstrates that the stylised world of Maldon is far from synonymous with that of the trenches of Flanders, he describes the latrine facilities of the latter. John Ball's reflection is : "It's cushy enough" (In P. 55). Vile conditions may be their lot, but there is a grim determination to make the best of them which finds expression in a humour which helps the men to retain their sanity. They direct their energies into providing for their immediate necessities. They may fulminate against their lot, but practical issues finally triumph : "They complained each to each other, they blasphemed the whole order of Being, they hoped breakfast would soon be up" (In P. 71). When there is something to be done, they do

it to the best of their ability. For instance, John Ball "as he sat at his sentry work ... [was] pathetically conscientious of his orders" (In P. 71). When the battle finally begins in Part 7, there is the simple acceptance of death, quite without heroics:

> anyway, no fretting of watch on the wall nor their hysteria, / one hamper nor accelerate / exact kinetics of his advent / nor make less miserable his tale to tell / and even Mrs. Chandler's son / will stiffen one Hayo Mannynge / to the ninth death —
> (In P. 159-160)

Or there is the concise, factual account of Wastebotton's death: He "married a wife on his first-leave but the whinnying splinter razored diagonal and mess-tin fragments drove inward and toxined underwear" (In P. 157-158). The fact that the domestic tragedy which this death involves is not elaborated makes it the more poignant. There is a deliberate emotional restraint in the precise enumeration of the details of his death. And there is a cruel irony in the way that the familiar, such as this "mess-tin," fulfills a fatal role in the story of Waste-bottom. That men should have to wait quietly and in "correct alignment" (In P. 158) in such an inhuman atmosphere surely vindicates their claim to heroism. The opportunities for single combat between champions may now be a thing of the past, as may the strong bond of personal loyalty between a "ring-giver" and his "hearth-companions," but there is still an active role for leadership to play. There is a discipline in rank which buttresses the human will. When the men are on the point of fall-ing back at a false alarm, "Captain Godwaladr restores / the Excellent Disciplines of the Wars" (In P. 101). The Shakespearian echo recalls

Captain Mnollon; but whereas the latter was a comic figure, Jones's character is cast in a serious part. He has more affinity with that Cadwallader who, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, was the last British king of all Britain. There was a prophecy that he should return and restore a British dynasty.[10] Lest the reality of the situation in which he acted should be lost sight of in any "romantic" aura, Captain Cadwaladr is described as coming "to the breach full of familiar blasphemies" (In P. 101). He is typical of the best of his class with no more refinement than the exigencies allowed.

This method of balancing an allusion with a realistic comment is characteristic of David Jones's style. Sudden changes of register and anti-climax are the very stuff of In Parenthesis. Gwyn Williams, writing of the old Welsh heroic poetry in the Book of Aneirin says :

> much use [is] made of unexpected contrasts, as in the very first line of the poem, where the youth of the warriors is set alongside the antiquity of their virtue, and again in the tremendous line... "and after feasting there was silence."[11]

This technique may be seen also in Jones, even in passages which are mainly contemporary in reference, as in the following :

> Ffleure on pâle hêrnes lôssed /
> and viela inexpurably brêkin /
> an' Wêt pafes blêddin' Glôry /
> Glôry
> Glôry Hêlleluîjah /
> and the Royal Welsh sing :
> Jêrn /
> Lôver of no anîl... to Aberêtwyrth / (In P. 160)

10. See Rhys, Welsh People, p.309.

11. An Introduction to Welsh Poetry, p.25.

I shall return to the occasion of this piece shortly. The first two lines are an echo of two verses from the Apocalypse. They are respectively :

> And I looked, and behold a pale horse : and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth;[12]

and,

> ... I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.[13]

These two verses together constitute an impressive background upon which to draw. They give some impression of the significance which could have been attached to the First World War. But the next line of the passage, "an' 'at price bloodin' Glory," clearly indicates that, for the infantry men themselves, they had little idea of such matters. Perhaps it was as well for their sanity. They did not care for winning "Glory." They did what they had to do, and did not probe the nature of their actions further. Because the men involved did not see themselves as heroes, does not mean that they were not such. In fact, their very lack of self-consciousness, their complete lack of pretence to greatness, is one indication of it. The narrator can see them against a wider canvas, and so can the odd character here and there like

---

12. Revelations VI, 8 (A.V.).
13. Ibid., XVI, 1 (A.V.)

Anglia having but, for the most part, they repeat the exploits of their ancestors, oblivious that the latter even existed. The phrase "Glory / Glory Hallelujah" recalls the Battle Hymn of the Republic, and probably has an air of evangelical fervour about it which naturally conjures up the thought of Welsh Methodists. The hymn, "Jesu, lover of my soul / Let me to thy bosom fly," is certainly indicative of the latter. But the hymn has no longer its real religious significance for these men. It is, like their Methodism, a badge of nationality, so that the patriotic war-cry, "to Aberystwyth," may readily be substituted for the second line. The social status of the singers is conveyed in the replacement of "my" by "me." These men are just plain ordinary people. However, the passage is written in metrical form : six lines of four stresses each. Not only does the flow of the rhythm help to fuse the discordant, if not contradictory, elements in the piece, but it increases its emotional intensity. As the rhythm lies behind the prose meaning, so further reconcilers of significance lie behind the actions of the men.

The technique illustrated in the foregoing passage is one which Jones uses to integrate his allusions to the past with his contemporary narrative. This may be observed in the "Boast of Bel" (In P. 79-84). The latter commences with an outburst of eloquence. He is interrupted by the question : "Wot about Methuselum, Taffy" (In P. 79). The shift of register, from the rhetorical to the colloquial, almost automatically produces anti-climax. The bombast of Bel, if it is such, is at once deflated. Obviously, the questioner is highly sceptical of Bel's claim

to have experienced practically the whole history of the human race. The passage is protected against attacks of artificiality by these being foretalled by the author. Continually, throughout In Parenthesis, David Jones incorporates the work's own self-criticism. The reader may align himself with the practical but limited outlook of the majority of the soldiers and, indeed, of the nation; or he may recognise the truth of the cultural and historical perspective of the omniscient narrator without necessarily sacrificing reality to it.

Another device which may be illustrated from this passage is the use of deliberate anachronisms. "Helen Constantinum" with whose name legend associates the Roman roads of Britain, is described as "a regular dear with the labour companies," an expression more appropriate to some contemporary female attraction than to an almost mythical figure (In P. 30-31).[14] Similarly, Dai claims of himself and his companions that "we staked trip-wire as a precaution at / Troy Novaunt" (In P. 31). The latter was the city founded by the Trojan Brutus. London is supposed to have been built on its site,[15] while "trip-wire" is part of the defensive system in trench warfare.[16] Incongruities such as these humanise what appear to be the more grandiose aspects of Dai's claims. Tragedy functions in a superhuman setting, comedy in a pre-eminently human one. Numerous touches are constantly being introduced by David

---

14. See In Parenthesis, Part 4, ¶[37]I, on pp.208-209.
15. Ibid., Part 4, ¶[37]J, on p.209.
16. Ibid., Part 4, ¶4, on p.203.

Jones. If his allusions postulate a significant thread of tragedy in the story he relates, then it has to be tested against strain in a strangely comic atmosphere.

Not only is there deliberate anachronism in the work, but there is also deliberate archaism. Perhaps one of the most interesting of such passages is that already referred to in connection with the general who disapproved of the frontal-attack method to be used in the Somme offensive (In P. 138).[17] He is first described as "that long bloke and a man of great worship [who] was in an awful pee." The Malorian echo, "a man of great worship," is slipped in between the two colloquial phrases which keep the description from becoming inflated. Indeed, the incongruity produces humour. Not, even as in a law court a point ruled out of order cannot be unheard, so neither can this heroic echo. An analogy has been suggested. Private Saunders continues: he "say as how it was going to be a first class balloons and murthering of Christen: men." Slang justifies a more solemn phrase, but the latter is presented in the colloquial disguise of "murthering," which deviation from normal spelling cases the transition to the Middle English -en ending for "Christien." Then comes a typical piece of Middle English emphatic negative, "never for no threat nor entreaty." Finally, the general "says, blubbin' they reckon, [now] is this noble fellowship wholly mischiefed." The last phrase is a conflation of two passages from Le Morte d'Arthur. In one the King laments the break-up of the

---

17. See above, pp.83-84.

Round Table on account of the quest of the Holy Grail :

> "Alas!" seyde kynge Arthure unto sir Gawayne, "ye have nygh slayne me for the ever that ye have made, for thorow you ye have beraufte me the fayryest and the trewyst of knyghthode that ever was sene togydir in any realme of the worlde...."
>
> And therewith the teerys fille in his yen.... [18]

In the other, the lament is made for the inevitable destruction of King Arthur's realm through the quarrel of Mordred and Launcelot :

> "Alas!" seyde sir Gawayne and sir Gareth, "now ys this realme holy destroyed and nynehaved, and the noble fellyshyp of the Rounde Table shall be dispqrbeled.

These two pieces are generally recognised as among the finest and most impressive in Malory. David Jones in recalling them is suggesting what standard of comparison has to be used to do justice to the seriousness of this present war. Still, inflation is prevented, for "blubbin'" is a very colloquial translation of "And therewith the teerys fille in his yen." So far the whole account has led up to this final unmistakable Arthurian reminiscence. Now the passage is carefully moved away from this highly literary plane. The reader should have grasped the ultimate significance of the scene; but the viewpoint of the ordinary soldier still has to be put :

> Anyway it was a sort they were for it to do battle with him to-morn in the plain field. There was some bastard woods

---

18. Vinaver's Malory, Book XXI, Chaps. 7-8, p.655.

19. Ibid., Book XX, Chap. 1, p.619. See <u>In Parenthesis</u>, Part 6, fn[9], on p.219.

> as Jonzy was sitting tight in and this mob had clicks for the job of asking him to move on - if you please - an' thanks very much indeed, signally obliged to yer, Jonzy-boy. (In P. 138)

As far as Private Saunders' listeners are concerned the practical outcome is the important point : they were going into action, there was nothing they could do about it, the easiest way to bear the strain was to accept it. A final echo of Malory is present in the phrase "to do battle with his to-morn in the plain field." This smoothes the gradation from one style to another. This second paragraph does not undermine the effect of the first, in fact, it emphasises it. For without having conceptualised it, these men have some inkling of the tragic significance of that in which they are involved. Their solution is to ignore it. They bolster up their courage with the odd oath, a nonchalant tone, and a smart joke.

Two factors prevent a passage such as the foregoing from standing out awkwardly in the total context of the work : one is the highly individual nature of Jones's regular style; and the other is the shifting focus of consciousness employed.

Many of David Jones's stylistic devices are contrived to maximise the sense of the immediacy of a sensation : "Away somewhere, gun with lifted muzzle, Jaguar-coughs, across the rain" (In P. 30). The indefinite article is omitted before "gun." The omission of articles is a favourite device of concentration used by Jones. The verb is in the present tense. The phrase "across the rain" suggests that the latter is the fixed and solid aspect of the landscape, that it is a

perfectly valid equivalent, under the peculiar circumstances, for a more expected collocation such as "plain."

Biblical echoes make archaic forms of negation quite familiar : "So they would go a long while in the solid dark, nor moon, nor battery, dispelled" (In P. 37);[20] or the description of their camp before the final assault as being "of no long continuing nor abidingness, yet not by no means haphazard nor prejudicial to good-order" (In P. 144).[21]

Very often past-participles are given an archaic form, as in this account of what horizon was visible to the soldiers at night : "tiny flickers very low to the south - their meandering world-edge <u>prickt</u> out bright" (In P. 38)[22] Notice also the adjective "bright" used for the adverb "brightly," a device familiar from any study of Milton. The verb has also been omitted in the interests of condensation, and the intensification of the sensuous apprehension of the scene. Its place has been taken by the past-participial adjective. "Saturate" occurs as the past-participial adjective instead of "saturated." This is more a sixteenth or seventeenth than a twentieth century usage. Examples of both may be found : "They lighted saturated cigarettes" (In P. 30); and, "Saturate, littered, rusted-coilings" (In P. 39). The adjective is also frequently used as a substantive, as in the sentence : "thin blue smoke rises straight... to thin-out amber against the sectors <u>height</u>" (In P. 62).[23] This practice enables qualities to partake of

---

20. Cf. Psalm cxxi, 6 (A.V.).
21. Cf. Hebrews, xiii, 14 (A.V.).
22. Italics mine.
23. Italics mine.

the subpotentiality of objects. However, it would take someone more competent in linguistics than I to do justice to the style of David Jones.

The next result of his style is the way in which it allows him to incorporate in his text, without any disruption of the total texture, passages from the poetry and prose of various ages. This may be illustrated by an unfootnoted echo of The Ancient Mariner. To recall that poem was peculiarly appropriate. Though a modern work, both its ballad form and its subject-matter were intended to evoke a medieval atmosphere. Thus it is in keeping with the rest of Jones's allusions.

> And the deepened stillness as a calm, cast over us - a potent influence over us and him [the enemy] - dead-calm for this Severance deals, and for the exceeding things. (In P. 53-54)[24]

recalls

> Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
> 'Twas sad as sad could be;
> And we did speak only to break
> The silence of the sea!
> * * * * * * *
> Day after day, day after day,
> We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
> * * * * * * *
> The very deep did rot: O Christ!
> That ever this should be!
> Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
> Upon the slimy sea.[25]

---

24. Italics mine.

25. Samuel T. Coleridge, The Ancient Mariner, Part II, lines 107-110, 115-116, 123-126, resp. Italics mine.

Even more impressive is the following incorporation into the text of a passage from Chaucer, to describe the entrance to the trench system :

> A pallid Very-light climbed up from away in front. This gate of Mons semipotente, the grisly place, like flat painted scene in toplights' crude disclosing. Low sharp-stubbed tree-skeletons, stretched slow moving shadows; faintest rumbling heard just at ground level. With the across movement of that light's shining, showed long and strait the dark entry, where his ministrants go, by tunnelled ways, whispering. (In P. 44)[26]

The relevant passage from The Knight's Tale is :

> First on the wal was peynted a forneys,
> In which ther dwelleth neithur man no beste,
> With knotty knarry bareyn trees olde
> Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to biholde;
> In which ther ran a rumbul and a swough,
> As though a storm shulde breken every bough :
> And downward from an hille, under a bente,
> Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotente,
> Wrought al of burned steel, of which the entree
> Was long and strait, and gastly for to see.[27]

It is interesting to note that this same passage was quoted in the Notes to Lady Guest's translation of The Mabinogion, a work with which Jones was very familiar.[28]

This ability of his style to incorporate other writers' verse, even if in paraphrase, leads on to the consideration of another important

---

26. Italics mine. See In Parenthesis, Part 5, ll[20], on p.197.
27. Italics mine.
28. Guest, Mabinogion, p.373.

aspect of his work. This is the extreme flexibility of his style, and, in particular, of its variety of rhythm and cadence. Though this may seem like a digression, I believe it is essential to recognise Jones's general technique before attempting finally to appraise the success with which he has incorporated past material into a contemporary narrative. The final stature of a writer depends upon his style, because it is this which distinguishes him, unum inter pares. The ability to embody ideas in significant language is the measure of style. Reference has already been made to a passage which cannot be described otherwise than as verse.[29] So far I have deliberately designated both In Parenthesis and The Anathemata as "works." Controversy is likely to continue for some time as to the proper term to be used in relation to them. Traditional verse there is, and traditional prose. There is also free verse, and passages of highly wrought prose. It has been suggested that these diverse elements are capable of being subsumed under the heading of "poetry," and that the works should be called "poems." Yet, In Parenthesis in particular has many virtues which are characteristically those of prose. Merle E. Swank even calls it a "novel."[30] Furthermore, it lacks a certain basic regularity which even yet is normally expected in poetry. To use "poem" as a blanket term, I am convinced, only tends to critical confusion. Therefore, as David Jones himself uses the word "writing" to apply to both In Parenthesis

---

29. See above, p.164.

30. "David Michael Jones: In Parenthesis.", p.68 et passim.

and The Anathemata, I feel justified in continuing to refer to them simply as "works." This peculiar form of writing, a blend of prose and poetry, is probably based, in Jones's case, at least theoretically, on the old Welsh prose tale which could be interrupted at various emotional and other climaxes by a stanza of verse, termed an "englyn." Branwen the Daughter of Llyr and Math the Son of Mathonwy, stories in The Mabinogion, contain examples of this technique.[31] Boethius, incidentally, was another forerunner. A principal advantage of the form as practised by David Jones is the extreme flexibility which it allows the author. To illustrate this effectively I must unfortunately quote at length :

> Skin off those comforters - to catch with their
> cocked ears
> the early bird,
> and meagre chattering of
> December's prime
> shrill over from
> Blor wood.
> | Blor | wood | fog | pillowed, / by | low | mist | isled, / a
> | play of | hide and | seek ar | bored / for the | white | diaphane.
> To their eyes seeming a wood moving,
> a moving grove advisioned.
> Stand-to.
> Stand-to.
> Stand-to-arms.
> Out there,
> got out there
> got into that fire trench.
> Pass it along to Stand-to. (In P. 59-60).

31. See Gwyn Williams, Introduction to Welsh Poetry, pp.29, 32.

This passage describes the first revoille of the latest arrivals at the front. The opening series of two stress lines attempts to recapture in verse-form something of the short staccato chirrup of, say, sparrows in winter - a season when birds are either not at their most musical, or when the most musical of them have participated in some form of migration. There follows a piece of prose which for cadence, diction, and figurative expression, could rival any poem. To give but one example, notice the way the post-positioning of the past-participial and other adjectives helps to build up the series of cadenced phrases. I have indicated the divisions and marked in the sentence stresses. Then comes a powerful image in which the trees as they emerge from, or disappear into, the mist are imagined to be a German version of the ruse employed when Birnam Wood came to Dunsinane. The poetic diction of "advisioned" is deliberate. This "vision" is interrupted by the order to "Stand-to." In the trench system, this order sweeps across from one position to the next consecutively, hence the repetition of the order. The last few lines are in some ways the most interesting. "Out there" returns the focus to the ordinary soldier's pre-occupation with the enemy confronting him; this thought merges into one of fear, as he registers the the necessity to "get out there" and face the Germans; finally, he becomes aware that he is simply being told to get on with the routine activities of a defensive war. The whole passage ends quietly as the first order of the first day, the forerunner of many similar orders and days, is passed along by word of mouth from one man to his neighbour.

Besides the stylistic variety of this piece, there is another

equally important feature : namely, the way in which the account moves from objective relation by the narrator, to straightforward dramatization, to detailing of the consciousness of the characters themselves. This introduces the second major factor in In Parenthesis which prevents the allusions in it from obtruding upon the reader. John H. Johnston, in an article, "David Jones : The Heroic Vision," carefully analyses the variable centre of consciousness in the work.[32] It is important, in the first place, to realise that the narrative does not advance by the development of plot involving the interaction of various characters.[33] There is the linear progress from the embarkation to the final offensive, but movement within that context is principally in terms of a series of sensuous impressions. Landscape, character, speech, are all alike apprehended as if they were somehow tangible objects. The narrator sometimes gives a straightforward description : Mr. Jenkins

> was talking to the commander of No. 6; a huddled sentry, next them, by the wall of bags. The rain increased where they miserably waited, there was no sound at all but of its tiresome spatter; the clouded moon quite lost her influence, the sodden night, coal-faced. They lighted saturated cigarettes. (In P. 30)

Or again, there is an account of the stream of consciousness of John Ball, bracketed by the objective narration :

---

32. "David Jones: The Heroic Vision," p.68.
33. Ibid., pp.65-66.

> Gorilla-sergeant, in striped singlet, spring-toed, claps his hands like black-man-master : Get over - you Ball - you coxcon.
>
> Obstacles on jerks-course made of wooden planking - his night phantasm mazed a pre-war, more idiosyncratic grain, weaves with stored-up very other tangled threads; a wooden donkey for a wooden hurdle ....
>
> Hurdles on jerks-course all hard-edged for inefficient will not obtain the prize ones, who beat the air; wooden donkeys for the chins of nervous newcomer to the crowded nightclass, step over to get your place beside Mavis; it's a winding mile between hostile master from the swing-door.. Stepping over Miss Weston's thrown about belongings. Across his night dream the nightmare walking :
>
> Move on - get a move on - step over - up over. (In P. 32-35)[34]

In this instance it is important to note the way Jessie L. Weston's name is introduced, with all its connotations of the Westoland theme. On one level "Miss Weston" is a girl in the "night-class"; on another she is the authoress of an important anthropological study. Since From Ritual to Romance was not published until 1920, the pre-war John Ball could not possibly have read it (though he could have read other of her works). Thus, even here, in a reasonably realistic piece, other more literary connections are unobtrusively being made. In Part 7 in particular, the second personal pronoun is increasingly used, and the reader is drawn into the consciousness of John Ball, who is the author's most important centre of sensibility : "Now you looked about you for

---

34. Italics mine.

what next to do, or you fixed blindly among the trees and ventured a little further inward" (In P. 172).

However, there is yet another level of consciousness and, for the present argument, this is the one most relevant.

> John Ball, posted as 1st Day Sentry, sat on the fire-step; and looking upward, saw in a cunning glass the image of a big [the enemy's] morning parapets, his breakfast-fire smoke, the twisted wood beyond. (In P. 65)

This is unexceptional, but it leads into that passage already discussed in which the "potency" of "the woods of all the world" "to move the bowels of us" is described. The allusions range from classical mythology to modern folk-custom. Now, it is known that Ball had educated tastes,[35] yet he is still an adolescent,[36] and to claim all this knowledge for him is as improbable as it is unnecessary. For, though the whole piece is set in the context of a daydream John Ball has as he gazes into his trench periscope, it is his potential thought, not his actual thought, which is represented. Had he been sufficiently aware of his cultural heritage, were modal memories fully conscious and not just inherent, then such might have been his mental processes. What is true here of Ball is also true of other characters throughout the whole work. An additional factor which prevents the intrusion of any discrepancy between the narrative reality and the hinterland of allusion

---

35. On page 95 of In Parenthesis I think one can take it as fairly certain that John Ball is reading from The Oxford Book of English Verse.

36. See In Parenthesis, p.171: "where adolescence walks the shrieking wood."

is the fact that whereas there is an abundance of realistic apperception, there is little rounded characterization. Indeed, a figure such as Dai is more mythical than anything else.

Therefore, over and above the question, in terms of whose consciousness is the story told, whether that of the narrator, of John Bell, or even of the reader, there is always the matter of the total perspective, which is a double one. There is the actual, fully comprehended significance of each scene; and there is its potential significance, given the knowledge to set it in the total context of human experience, especially in so far as that impinges on the history of this Ireland. Nevertheless, the power of the work, and ultimately its success, inheres in the fact that the story is so vivid in its sensuous immediacy that the first level of perspective together with a minimum apprehension of the second, is sufficient to enthrall the reader until he has had time to probe its deeper meaning.

PART II. CHARLES WILLIAMS

I Mystical Experience in the Works of Charles Williams

Several subjects which by now have become familiar from the foregoing study of David Jones also figure largely in the work of Charles Williams. There is, for example, the interest in early Welsh poetry, in an historical Arthur, and in the great thinkers of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the type of literature which these two writers produced is so different that it is not only an indication of the complexity of the period upon which they drew, but it is also significent of the extent to which any author remoulds the past to his own viewpoint. In her "Introduction" to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, Anne Ridler has written that "the ideas he was expressing were always more important to Charles Williams than the medium of expression."[1] For this reason it seems to me most profitable to approach his work, at least initially, through the ideas contained in it; and from there to proceed to a discussion of his contribution to literature as a serious artist. That idea which to my mind tends to dominate his whole work is the importance of mysticism. This is particularly true of his novels and of the Taliessin poems, and it is therefore with those writings that I shall be primarily concerned. The object of this chapter is to elucidate Williams's basic assumptions on the subject of mysticism.

---

1. London, 1958 p.x. All references to this Introduction will be given as Ridler, Image of the City. All references to the essays contained in this selection will be given as Williams, Image of the City.

Traditionally, there are two modes of mystical experience and expression : the one the Via Negativa, the other, the Via Affirmative. For Dionysius the Areopagite, one of the most important exponents of the Negative Way, the Affirmative Way had "a value as leading up to"[2] the other. The Way of Affirmation describes God in terms of the highest excellencies apprehensible by man; it affirms the extent to which God is above mankind, but it does so by means of superlatives which are humanly intelligible. The Way of Negation declares that to speak of God in that fashion is to falsify the position; and it attempts to redress the balance by asserting that God is so other that He cannot "be described by the reason or perceived by the understanding";[3] therefore, it is truer to say of Him, for example, that He "is not soul, or mind, or endowed with the faculty of imagination, conjecture, reason, or understanding."[4] This leads up to the point where any description of God, whether affirmative or negative, fails; and His Godhead can only be experienced because It "transcends all... by the pre-eminence of Its simple and absolute nature - free from every limitation and beyond them all."[5]

Dionysius in his Mystical Theology makes quite explicit the difference in methodology between the Affirmative and Negative Ways. In the

---

2. C.E. Rolt, trans. with introd. Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology (London, 1920), p.51. Hereafter cited as Rolt, Dionysius. Williams is known to have used this particular edition. See The Descent of the Dove, p.63, N1.
3. Rolt, Dionysius, p.200.
4. Rolt, loc. cit.
5. Rolt, p.201.

former, he writes (referring back to his own Divine Names), "we began with the most universal statements, and then through intermediate terms we came at last to particular titles."[6] This is the process of which Taliessin, Williams's spokesman in his Arthurian cycle, is aware when he visits Byzantium. There, the "Acts issue from the Throne," and "the identities of creation" are "phenomenally" abated "to kinds and kindreds."[7] "The process from the universal to the particular is the process of actual existence."[8] God is the origin of everything, and in so far as anything exists it participates in Him. Creation was that action by which the One became the Many. The Unity of God manifested itself in Multiplicity. The Affirmative Way follows the process of creation in so far as it seeks to recognize the quality of God which inheres in each particular of the phenomenal universe which, of course, includes man.

On the other hand, Dionysius says of the Negative Way that in it, "ascending upwards from particular to universal conceptions we strip off all qualities in order that we may attain a naked knowledge of... that super-essential Darkness which is hidden by all the light that is in existent things."[9] Taliessin early in his career has an experience which approximates to this. One night on his way to Byzantium he has

---

6. Rolt, pp.195-196.

7. Taliessin through Logres (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p.6. References to this work will hereafter be given in the text in parentheses as T.T.L.

8. Rolt, Dionysius, p.196.

9. Rolt, pp.195-196.

a vision in his sleep. In the course of that vision his spiritual insight proceeds from a view of the total creation imaged as the geography of the Empire to a fleeting glimpse of the divine reality which is the origin of the phenomenal universe, and both inheres in it and transcends it. He sees "a point" :

> tiny, dark-rose, self-glowing,
> as a firefly's egg or (beyond body and spirit,
> * * * * * *
> the entire point of the thrice co-inherent Trinity
> when every crown and choir is vanished,
> and all sight and hearing is nothing also.[10]

Thus, Taliessin has had an experience of both Ways.

Essentially, the Via Negativa and the Via Affirmativa are complementary rather than in competition; but historically, the balance has been in favour of the former rather than of the latter. Williams complains that the "Way of the Rejection of Images has been far more considered throughout Christendom than the Way of the Affirmation of Images."[11] He believes that the intention of the Early Church was that, "both methods, the Affirmative Way and the Negative Way, were to co-exist."[12] He asserts that "one way is not superior to the other, nor perhaps more difficult."[13] He blames St. Augustine for the fact that

---

10. The Region of the Summer Stars (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p.16. References to this work will hereafter be given in the text in parentheses as R.S.

11. Williams, Image of the City, p.20. I have not considered it necessary to give specific references to the articles contained in this collection.

12. The Descent of the Dove (London: Faber and Faber, 1950), p.57.

13. Williams, Image of the City, p.69.

his influence helped to make the Via Negativa almost into a fashion, at the expense of the other Way.[14] The real difficulty is that these two Ways are not simply concerned with the terminology and techniques of the transcendence of ordinary consciousness. They further involve a whole approach to life. Evelyn Underhill defined "mysticism" as "the art of union with Reality" or God.[15] The controversy arises when one comes to consider how best this may be achieved.

Throughout the Middle Ages the standard method was by means of the degrees of prayer, whereby gradually the initiate freed himself from thoughts of sense, or even of spiritual matters, until his mind was totally receptive to the infusion of the Divine. Even Julian of Norwich, who sought, in accordance with the Via Affirmative, "to know God, almighty, all-wise, all-good," considered it an absolute pre-requisite of union with God that the soul "be detached from all creation," for "then only can it experience spiritual rest."[16] Thus, the orthodox view of the Affirmative Way entailed a fair amount of Rejection. Asceticism is the first problem encountered in mysticism seen as a way of life.

Before discussing the implications of asceticism so far as one's view of the universe is concerned, it will be helpful to ascertain what

---

14. Concent of the Dove, p.65.

15. Quoted by F.C. Happold, Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology, Penguin Books, 1963 (enl. 1964), p.30. Hereafter cited as Happold.

16. Clifton Wolters, trans. with introd. Revelations of Divine Love by Julian of Norwich, Penguin Books, 1966, p.68. Hereafter cited as Wolters, Revelations.

part rejection plays in the lives of those characters in Williams's writings who unambiguously exhibit mystical tendencies. In The Descent of the Dove, Williams wrote that "no Affirmation could be so complete as not to need definition, discipline, and refusal."[17] For all mystics, the first stage along their chosen Way is "Purgation." This for instance is true of Sybil Coningsby in The Greater Trumps. Before she was able to achieve the poise which she exhibits in that novel, it is said that "days of pain and nights of prayer had passed while her lonely soul escaped; innocent joys as well as guilty hopes had been starved. There had been a time when the natural laughter that attended on her natural intelligence had been hushed, when her brother had remarked that 'Sybil seemed very mopy'."[18] Similarly, before Taliessin actually achieved his mature style, whether of poetry or of living, it was foretold that, "Many a mile of distance in the Empire was to go / to the learning" (HG. 15). In both cases Rejection was but a stage upon the Way, though a very necessary one. Sybil Coningsby discovered that the "true law" was that she had "the right and the power to possess all things, on the one condition that she was herself possessed."[19] She was to be possessed by God - "Love would have been sufficient by itself but it was necessary at first to concentrate on something which could be distinguished from all its mortal vessels, and the more one

---

17. The Descent of the Dove, p.57.
18. The Greater Trumps (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), p.124.
19. Loc. cit.

lived with that the more one found that it possessed in fact all the attributes of Deity."[20] No one could be united with God or Love without living the life of Love; and this involved rejecting one's self to the extent that one was only conscious of, and obedient to, the higher principle of Love at work within. How far this necessitated detachment "from all creation," may be deduced from the pleasure Sybil took in the snowstorm. On leaving Aaron Lee's house, "she sank before the wind, but not in impotence; rather as the devotee sinks before the outer manifestations of the God that he may be made more wholly one with that which manifests."[21] And on returning, "not for salvation from death, but for the more manifestation of its power, she adored the Ecstasy of Love."[22]

Two other forms of mystical Rejection occur in Williams's work. There is, first of all, that form of which Bindrane, the "heroine" of the Taliessin cycle, is typical. She rejects marriage and ordinary existence in order to lead the life of a nun. Williams does accept the validity of the life of intercessory prayer practiced by the contemplative orders of Christendom, though he never stresses it. However, what is important about Bindrane is the fact that she sacrificed her life in order that another woman might live :

---

20. Ibid., p.125.
21. Ibid., p.123.
22. Ibid., p.132.

> Where it was still to-night, in the last candles of Ingren, a lady danced, to please the sight of her friends; her cheeks were stained from the exercise of Percivale's sister. (WH, 66)

The Rejection practised by Chloe Burnett in Many Dimensions is of the same order. She is a reasonably attractive young woman and apparently enjoys as much as any other the attention paid to her by men. She has just returned from a visit to Birmingham, a visit in which she had been accompanied by a young man called Oliver Doncaster :

> Chloe had usually found a fairly long train journey - especially in the first class compartment Lord Argley had naturally assumed she would take - in the company of an intelligent and personable young man who rather obviously admired her, a very pleasant, and even exciting, method of spending the time. There was so happy a mixture of the known and the unknown; there was all the possibility of advance and yet all the surety of withdrawal - there was in short such admirable country for campaigning that she could not very clearly understand why she had today looked at it without any thought of a campaign. ... The journeys were ended and there was no regret. She must, Chloe thought when she became conscious of this, be terribly excited. But she was not excited. She only wanted to serve the Stone - ... Once or twice her experience in the operation which she and the Chief Justice had directed occurred to her; with the suggestion of a possibility that there indeed a choice beyond her knowledge had been made and a first separation from mortality dutifully and sadly undergone.[23]

---

23. Many Dimensions (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), pp.194-195.

This passage had to be quoted at length because of its importance. The incident parallels the traditional rejection of the senses. At a later date an attempt is made to rob her of her Type of the Stone of Suleiman. Instead of using the Stone to protect herself which was one possibility open to her, she surrenders her will to the will and awaits the outcome. To reach this state has involved a severe spiritual struggle; she says, "silently in her panting breath : 'Thy will... do... do if Thou wilt; or' - she imagined the touch of the marauder on the calf of her leg and quivering in every nerve added - 'or... not'."[24] Having decided upon her course of action she then

> enunciated the formula she had shaped with such pain and at last unconsciously abandoned the formula itself for the meaning that lay within it.
>
> "Do, or do not," she silently uttered, and fell even mentally into stillness in order that unhindered that action might or might not take place.[25]

This carries her rejection quite clearly into the realm of the Negative Way. She has even rejected spiritual activity in the intensity of her desire to be united with the will of the Stone. It is, therefore, not surprising that her final act is to sacrifice herself to protect the world from the sacrilegious exploitation of the Stone. Her last nine months are, as she had foreseen in a vision, endured in an agony equivalent to the ascetic's mortification of the flesh. That side of her

---

24. Ibid., p.218.
25. Ibid., p.219.

body which is not paralysed shakes "every now and then with uncontrollable tremors,"[26] the outward manifestations of her inner stress. Finally, she dies; or, alternatively, she emerges from the womb of Eternity into Eternity itself. That which justifies her Rejection is its motivation. She has given her life because of her love for her fellows, by making herself amenable to the will of the Stone which embodies the material and spiritual principles of the created universe. Williams wrote elsewhere that "the two ways have the same basis and the same aim - 'to love everything because God loves it.' This is their union..."[27]

The other form of mystical Rejection with which Williams deals is that of the follower of the extreme Via Negativa, where the End of the Way, the mystic's absorption by God in transcendence, is his sole aim. This is exemplified in the career of the young bookshop assistant, Mr. Richardson, in The Place of the Lion. In conversation with Anthony Durrant he states his objective : "I will go straight to the end." To the other's suggestion that this attitude tends to evade life's need for action, he replies :

> "Why should one not?"
>
> "Other people, perhaps," Anthony almost shyly suggested.
>
> "If by any chance.... "[28]

At a later stage Anthony Durrant reflected that "much was possible to a man in solitude; perhaps the final transmutations and achievements in

---

26. Ibid., p.264.
27. Williams, Image of the City, p.69.
28. The Place of the Lion (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), p.122.

the sense on the yonder side of the central knowledge were possible only to the spirit in solitude. But some things were possible only to a man in companionship...."[29] One of these happens to be the way in which Anthony restores the world to normality. Ultimately, Richardson commits suicide by allowing himself to be consumed in an archetypal blaze of intellectual fire. Though Williams does not overtly condemn him - indeed he asserts the dignity of his way - yet the balance of the book and the juxtaposition of events are not in his favour. It is not Rejection as such which offends, but Rejection pursued for reasons which to ordinary men and women, at least, seem essentially selfish. This particular case introduces the second problem encountered in mysticism as a way of life, namely, the danger of passivity inherent in the Negative Way. This accusation is no new one to be levelled at contemplatives. The author of The Cloud of Unknowing wrote : "Just as then Martha complained of Mary her sister, so to this day do active complain of contemplatives."[30] Evelyn Underhill condemned seventeenth century Quietism as "pure passivity and indifference."[31] Williams's own view of the Affirmative Way seems at times to be almost synonymous with what F.C. Happold has termed the "Lesser Mystic Way" or the "mysticism of action".[32] It is important to recognise this possible confusion in Williams's mind, for it affects his

---

29. Ibid., p.187.

30. Clifton Wolters, trans. with introd. The Cloud of Unknowing, Penguin Books, 1961, p.76. Hereafter cited as Wolters, Cloud.

31. Quoted in Sidney Spencer, Mysticism in World Religion, Penguin Books, 1963, p.265. Hereafter cited as Spencer.

32. Happold, p.102.

whole attitude to the mysticism of the Middle Ages. I shall discuss this question in detail in my next chapter.

Passivity of a certain type is one of the characteristics of mysticism. This is how F.C. Happold describes it:

> In the state of Contemplation there is found a self-forgetting attention, a humble receptiveness..... Gradually, by a deeper and deeper process of self-merging, a communion is established... between him who feels and that which he feels.[33]

With this state may be associated Taliesin waiting in "a passion of patience" (WH. 17) for the signal to attack at the Battle of Mount Badon. Or one could adduce the behaviour of the Archdeacon of Pavilion from the time when Gregory Peredurus regained possession of the Grail until the latter visited him to persuade him to go to London. The Archdeacon reflected that "it was not his business to display activity, but to wait on the Mover of all things."[34] When he had received Gregory's message, his reply was that he would have told him what he was going to do if he had known, but he did not in fact know. "The Archdeacon went back to his study, shut the door and gave himself up to interior silence and direction."[35] By far the most carefully recorded instances of this kind of passivity are descriptive of Nancy Coningsby. She has found her brother crouched in the snow, and has immense difficulty in raising him. "She stilled herself - either Love would lift him or

---

33. Happold, p.70.
34. Voz in Heaven (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), p.234.
35. Ibid., p.236.

Love would in some other way sufficiently and entirely resolve the crisis that held them."[36] This is an attitude similar to that of the Archdeacon's. However, she goes that stage further, and enters into "a communion... between him who feels and that which he feels." "That she should be walking so lightly through the storm didn't strike her as odd, because it wasn't she who was walking, it was Love, and naturally Love would be safe in his own storm."[37] In each of these three characters passivity is essentially a state of interior receptiveness to a superior impulse. They are either in a state of readiness to act or else, like Nancy Coningsby, are currently engaged in some activity.

Other characteristics of mysticism given by F.C. Happold are, "a feeling of intense joy, sureness and serenity."[38] They are peculiarly the result of that vision which sees God in all things. Sureness and serenity are what Nancy Coningsby exudes. When Aaron Lee fell, thereby hurting his ankle, she "kneeled to look at it, soothing him a little, even then, by the mere presence of unterrified and dominating serenity."[39] Pauline Anstruther, the heroine of Descent into Hell, after she has at last been enabled really to help another person in difficulties, realises "that all acts of love are the measure of capacity for joy."[40] Joy is the result of a person's union with God or

---

36. Greater Trumps, p.127.
37. Ibid., p.125.
38. Happold, p.91.
39. Greater Trumps, p.169.
40. Descent into Hell (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), p.171.

Love. Therefore, the more one acts in love, the more closely one is united with Love, and the greater is one's joy. Taliessin, witnessing the final reconciliation of the world of Logres at the Mass celebrated by Lancelot, sings, "there was no capable song for the joy in me" (TTL. 91).

Williams took St. Paul's exhortation : "Rejoice evermore,"[41] at its face value. He says that "it is forbidden to the Christian to entertain despair...."[42] So for Nancy Coningsby, probably Williams's most successful embodiment of the ideals of mysticism, not to feel enjoyment was seen as a failure of duty. Though Williams said that the Via Affirmativa demanded "definition, discipline, and refusal";[43] nevertheless, Taliessin lists the qualities of the Affirmative Way as "love, laughter, intelligence, and prayer" (TTL. 73). Williams's attitude seems to be that if one is going to affirm, then one's whole life has to be an affirmation. The whole tenor of his work endorses that well-known verse from St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians :

> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.[44]

Williams, I feel, would have said that, while an ascetic life might be

---

41. I Thessalonians, v, 16 (A.V.).
42. Williams, Image of the City, p.156.
43. Descent of the Dove, p.57.
44. Philippians, v, 8 (A.V.).

quite consistent with the letter of this text, its spirit would be almost bound to be lost. To have asserted through his characters that traditional asceticism, unless for a specific purpose of love, was not necessary to a life of mystical experience, was not for him a sufficient answer. If his understanding of the Affirmative Life was to stand, then it was necessary to provide it with a metaphysical basis.

In fact, Williams characteristically reverts to the records of the church of the Fathers to find a basis for his own position. He writes in The Descent of the Dove :

> Counterchecking the asceticism it admired, the formal doctrine of Christendom concerning matter remained constant.. if the whole of Christendom had taken to the desert and lived among the lions, it remained true that the authority of the pillared pontiffs would have been compelled to assert that marriage and meat and wine were "valde bona". [45]

Speaking specifically of the hermits of the Thebaid, Williams a little earlier had said that the "old Gnostic view that matter was evil had no doubt affected them, and [also] the newer Gnosticism that had begun, in the form of Manichaeanism, to sweep inward from the East."[46] Gnosticism and Manichaeanism are major examples of dualistic systems. In them the universe had its origin in two opposing principles, spirit and matter. Evil was said to inhere in matter.[47] Consequently the effort

---

45. Descent of the Dove, p.57.

46. Ibid., p.55.

47. I am aware that this understanding of Gnosticism and Manichaeanism has been considerably qualified since the time of Williams's death. See Spencer, p.148.

of mankind was to free itself from the limitations of matter. This conflicts with the monism inherent in mysticism, with the peculiar position of Christianity based as it is upon the Incarnation, and with Williams's own very distinctive attitude to "nature".

Because mysticism sees the Many as derived from the One, or everything as having its origin in God, it is by definition monistic in its outlook. Dionysius the Areopagite states the case in the following terms :

> ... all things are contained beforehand and embraced by the One as an Unity in Itself. Thus Scripture speaks of the whole Supreme Godhead as the Cause of all things by employing the title of "One" ... [that "One"] wherein all things are knit together in one and possess a supernal Unity and super-essentially pre-exist....you will not find anything in the world but derives from the One (which, in a super-essential sense, is the name of the whole Godhead) both its individual existence and the process that perfects and preserves it.[48]

Palomides, in the Taliessin cycle, was taught by "Talcat ibn Kula of Ispahan" (TTL. 33). "Evil and good were twins / once in the alleys of Ispahan" (TTL. 2). Therefore, the education of Palomides was presumably dualistic in its metaphysical basis. His conversion is to monism, so that he is able to say, "'The Lord created all things by means of his Blessing'" (TTL. 90). Charles Williams was strongly opposed to dualism, as one would have expected; and his writings

---

48. Rolt, Dionysius, p.107.

display various aspects of his monism. In The Greater Trumps, Ralph Coningsby and his father, together with their host Aaron Lee, are watching a cloud of gold, the "cloud of the beginning of things,"[49] emerging from Aaron's study. Barring its path was a table. "Over and below and about the table the swelling and sinking curtain of mystery swept - if it were not through it, for it did not seem to divide or separate the movement, and the cloud seemed to break from it on the side nearest Aaron just as it filled all the air around."[50] All matter participates in the one primeval substance. As F.C. Happold writes : "A common characteristic of many mystical states is the presence of a consciousness of the oneness of everything. All creaturely existence is experienced as a unity, as All in One and One in All."[51] The novel, Many Dimensions, makes the implications of this phenomenon more explicit. There, "the Stone of Suleiman ben Daood" is supposed to be "the First Matter."[52] Towards the end of the novel, Lord Arglay sees the whole of the phenomenal world take on the appearance of the Stone. All material existence is seen to be contained in the Stone. This, briefly, is Williams's view of physical phenomena, of place or space. His thought is enforced rather sensationally by the fact that the Stone is capable of transporting a person from one place to another, in "a flash."[53]

---

49. Greater Trumps, p.188.
50. Ibid., pp.187-188.
51. Happold, p.46.
52. Many Dimensions, pp.43, 56, resp.
53. See below, p.201.

On this theme of "Oneness," F.C. Happold continues that "in theistic mysticism God is felt to be in everything and everything to exist in God."[54] The Stone of Suleiman is claimed to be the source of all "spirits and material things."[55] Its own spiritual quality is testified to by the fact that though it is divided it "is unchanged, and the virtues are neither here nor there but all-where."[56] C.E. Rolt in a footnote to his translation of the Pseudo-Dionysius writes that the latter "touches on the fundamental difference between spiritual and material things. Cf. Shelley : 'True love has this different from gold or clay that to divide is not to take away!'"[57] At this stage I am not concerned with any specifically Jewish features of Williams's symbolism. For the present it is simpler to see the scheme of creation given in the novel in terms of the Christianised Neo-Platonism of someone such as John Scotus Erigena. In The Descent of the Dove Williams has a footnote reference to a book by Alice Gardner on Erigena, so that he was familiar with his philosophy.[58] According to Erigena's scheme, the Father produces Ideas in the Word, whence they are externalised as the spiritual and material universe.[59] The danger inherent in this system, as with all forms of Neo-Platonism, is that of Pantheism. This is guarded against by Williams, for Lord Arglay, in Many Dimensions, aware that "chimneys and clouds and sky"

---

54. Happold, p.46.
55. Many Dimensions, p.56.
56. Ibid., p.33.
57. Rolt, Dionysius, p.72, N^2.
58. Descent of the Dove, p.131, N^1.
59. Etienne Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (London, 1955), pp.119-20.

had "the appearance of the Stone," is also conscious that the "Stone was not these, yet these were the Stone."[60] Further, Lord Arglay is able to say with Julian of Norwich : "I saw the whole Godhead concentrated as it were in a single point."[61] For he saw that "from a point infinitely far a continual vibration mingled itself with the myriad actions of men." His illumination is transitory : "For a moment he saw the Unity of the Stone at a great distance within the Stone which was the world, and then the farther Mystery was lost in the nearer."[62] Like Taliessin, Lord Arglay has glimpsed God, or the Unity of All, in "a point"; but he has also seen how that "point" mingles Itself "with the myriad actions of men."

The Stone of Suleiman not only permits movement in place, but It also allows of "movement in time."[63] F.C. Happold writes that a "further characteristic of mystical experience is the sense of timelessness."[64] Many Dimensions is full of allusions to the problem of time, witnessing to that keen contemporary interest in the subject, the details of which have been summarised by Staffan Bergsten in his study of T.S. Eliot called Time and Eternity.[65] A footnote to Rolt's translation of The Mystical Theology of Dionysius divides time into three :

> (1) endless mechanical Time, i.e. mere endless succession;
> (2) Aevum, or developing and finally perfected living Time;
> (3) True Timeless Eternity.[66]

---

60. Many Dimensions, p.260.
61. Wolters, Revelations, p.80.
62. Many Dimensions, p.260.
63. Ibid., p.56.
64. Happold, p.47.
65. London, 1960.
66. Rolt, Dionysius, p.172, N[1].

"Aevum" is basically an eschatological concept. It is "Time" seen as a progress towards "Eternity." It applies to the individual as well as to the race. Williams is primarily concerned with the relationship between "Aevum" and "Eternity." The latter involves the concept of the "Timeless Moment" which is common to mystical experience. This is a state in which even "Aevum" is momentarily transcended. It produces a profound illumination; and unites the soul with "Reality"[67] or the "Super-Essential Unity."[68] Williams gives a very clear example of such a state in The Place of the Lion. On page 112 of the Faber edition of that novel occurs the following paragraph :

> "It makes it so awkward," Dr. Rockbotham said, passing through, with a little bow of acknowledgement, "where there is no easy way of - "

Then there intervenes a mystical illumination undergone by Anthony Durrant. But on page 116 the narrative is resumed where it left off, and the doctor concludes his sentence :

> "- discovering where his relations live - if any," Dr. Rockbotham said, shaking his head, and beginning the descent of the stairs.

In the instant between those two words, "of" and "discovering," Anthony has passed beyond the bounds of mortal existence and glimpsed something of the Divine. He has seen, however briefly "the place of realities."[69]

---

67. Evelyn Underhill, quoted Happold, p.30.
68. Holt, Dionysius, p.188.
69. Place of the Lion, pp.115-116.

Julian of Norwich, speaking of her thirteenth revelation, says : "All this was shown in a flash."[70] The word "flash" occurs several times in Williams's Taliessin poems and each time it is indicative of some mystical insight. Jesus, "the lord of charity," and God's greatest revelation of Himself to man, is described as "sole flash of the Emperor's glory" (TTL. 1). The Eucharist which, Williams claims in The Descent of the Dove,[71] shows the interdependence of the Affirmative and Negative Ways is called "a single sudden flash of identity" (TTL. 9). And twice a particular fact of "Reality" is spoken of as being brought "to a flash of seeing" (TTL. 77; SS. 20). In a sense, almost any mystical experience shares to a degree the nature of the "Timeless Moment"; but to give a quite unambiguous example, one in which transcendence is clearly present, let me refer back to the vision the sleeping Taliessin had of "the entire point of the thrice co-inherent Trinity" (SS. 16) while on his way to Byzantium. It is the quality of such an experience which entitles it to be regarded as timeless.

The questions which Descent into Hell raises about time, though related, are of a different order. Williams wrote in He Came Down from Heaven that "heaven... possesses timelessness; it has the quality of eternity, of (in the definition which Boethius passed on to Aquinas) 'the perfect and simultaneous possession of everlasting life'."[72] Yet,

---

70. Wolters, Revelations, p.104.

71. Descent of the Dove, p.58.

72. He Came Down from Heaven and The Forgiveness of Sins (London: Faber and Faber, 1950), p.11. All references to either of these works will be to this edition.

in The Forgiveness of Sins he wrote that "to know simultaneity is not, of itself, to know eternity; that is a different matter altogether."[73] Rarely, the mystic is so identified with the One that he shares in Its nature. But, on the whole, this privilege is reserved until "Aevum" passes into Eternity. This is the qualification even in the case of Anthony Durrant's experience of the world of spiritual reality. He catches sight of "hints and expressions of lasting things," but he does not see them in their superessential nakedness. "He knew and submitted; this world was not yet open to him, nor was his service upon earth completed."[74]

The ability to move freely within "mechanical Time" is the special privilege of those who are so orientated in "Aevum" as to have already a link with Eternity. Thus, in Many Dimensions, by exploiting the spiritual powers of the Stone of Suleiman, Sir Giles Tumulty was able to have a young man will himself into the past; and Sir Giles himself was able to foresee his own future, though the memory of it left him immediately. Similarly, Pauline Anstruther, in Descent into Hell, was able to bring comfort to her ancestor martyred four hundred years previously; and he presumably had been able to draw consolation from the future. This remarkable procedure was made possible because of their surrender to the governing principle of the universe, namely, Love. So in the Taliessin cycle, Virgil is said to have been "fathered of his

---

73. The Forgiveness of Sins, p.120.

74. Place of the Lion, p.116.

friends" (TTL. 32) : that is, that though a pagan the intercession of those Christian poets who were subsequently to be inspired by him ensured his redemption.

Perhaps I have already begun to oversimplify Williams's position. Towards the close of Descent into Hell, Peter Stanhope, the playwright, declares that men find themselves "like the Elizabethan drama living in at least two time schemes."[75] One scheme is concerned with sequential existence, the other is closely related to the idea of eternity. The source of Williams's view that past and future are accessible to the present is St. Augustine. The latter declares that ultimately there is only one time, the present, but that there is a "present of things past, memory," and a "present of things future, expectation."[76] Then he says of God :

> But far be it that Thou the Creator of the Universe, the Creator of souls and bodies, far be it, that Thou shouldest in such wise know all things past and to come. Far more wonderfully and far more mysteriously, dost Thou know them."[77]

To arrive at Williams's position some connection between the human cognition of time and the Divine knowledge has to be found. The link, I believe, is to be seen in a passage from The Descent of the Dove :

---

75. Descent into Hell, p.211.
76. Confessions, trans. with pref. E.B. Pusey, Everyman's Library, 1907, Bk. XI, Sec. 26 [xx], p.267.
77. Ibid., Bk. XI, Sec. 41 [xxxi], p.276.

> Christianity is, always, the redemption of a point, of one particular point. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." In this sense there is nothing but now; there is no duration.[78]

life is polarised towards the Good or the non-Good : "There is, in the end, no compromise between the two; there is only choice. The choice exists everywhere, at every minute, as a fundamental, ..."[79] Every moment of man's sequential existence does participate in Eternity to the extent that his condition in the realm of Timelessness is dependent upon the choices he exercises throughout the sequence of his life. Or, as Williams puts it in The Descent of the Dove, the medieval church recognised that "time did co-inhere in eternity, and every single fact of time had to be answered for in eternity;..."[80] In a monistic system governed by the idea of the Good, whenever a man decides upon a right course of action he is automatically associating himself with the true principle of Timelessness, and all sorts of freedoms may as a consequence be his.

For pre-Christian mysticism, while it asserted that the All was in the One and the One in the All, there was no satisfactory way of reconciling spirit with matter. The Neo-Platonist conception of union with the One entailed the maximum elevation of spirit, with the maximum elimination of matter. There was no suggestion that matter was

---

78. Descent of the Dove, p.14.
79. Williams, Image of the City, p.103.
80. Descent of the Dove, p.84.

in itself evil; but it was that manifestation of the One most distant from the central point. For the Christian mystic the union of spirit and matter had been achieved by the Incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. God was spirit; the Incarnate God was spirit manifested in matter, and fully one with it. The nature of the solution has already been suggested by the discussion of the Stone of Suleiman; for the Stone was both a spiritual and a material phenomenon. Moreover, even as it passed, at the conclusion of Many Dimensions, into the physical person of Chloe Burnett, so too was her spiritual union with it accomplished. Williams relies primarily on Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love to substantiate his position. The terms she uses for matter and spirit are "sensuality" and "substance." She says that "our substance and sensuality together are rightly named our soul, because they are united by God."[81] She continues that this soul, under its aspect of matter, is the physical manhood of Jesus, and this He derived from mankind; while, under its aspect of spirit, it is that interior part of man which participates in the Divinity of Jesus. Therefore, man and God co-inhere in the Person of the Son. Moreover, though this union was only finally consummated with the Incarnation of Jesus as an historical event, yet it was an inevitable result of God's original act of Creation. "I saw with absolute certainty that our substance is in God, and, moreover, that he is our sensuality too. The moment our soul was made sensual, at that moment was it destined from all

---

81. Wolters, Revelations, p.161. Quoted by Williams, Image of the City, p.68.

eternity to be the City of God."[82] In the philosophy of Duns Scotus, this position, held by Julian of Norwich as the orthodox one, was carried to its extreme : "Even without original sin, the Incarnation would have happened, for God, in His love for his creatures, wished to associate His Son with man."[83] Williams's version follows the reasoning of Duns Scotus fairly closely :

> God himself is pure spirit.... He had created matter, and he had determined to unite himself with matter. The means of that union was the Incarnation.... He willed... that his union with matter in flesh should be by a mode which precisely involved creatures to experience joy. He determined to be incarnate by being born; that is, he determined to have a mother. His mother was to have companions of her own kind; and the mother and her companions were to exist in an order of their own degree, in time and place, in a world. They were to be related to him and to each other by a state of joyous knowledge; they were to derive from him and from each other; and he was to deign to derive his flesh from them.[84]

In other words, God created matter so that He might be united with His creatures by Himself deriving from them. God and man were meant to co-inhere. Now, according to Julian of Norwich, Jesus was present in Adam. "In the servant is represented the second Person of the Trinity; and in the servant again Adam, or in other words, Everymen";[85] for,

---

82. Wolters, p.159. Quoted by Williams, loc. cit.

83. Leff, Medieval Thought, p.270. Cf. Williams, Image of the City, p.76.

84. Forgiveness of Sins, pp.119-120.

85. Wolters, Revelations, p.147.

"in the sight of God everyman is one man, and one man is everymen."[86] Provided all went well this situation would indeed have been a source of joy to God's creatures. However, the Fall intervened. Williams says that "the definition of the Fall is that man determined to know good as evil."[87] Since his monism only allowed one origin of all, namely God; and since all that originated from God was necessarily good; then the only possibility for evil was the perversion of the Good. At present, it is sufficient to accept the fact of the Fall. It did not abrogate the truth of Co-inherence; but it meant that man saw the Good of Co-inherence as evil, and was therefore blind to its existence. If all men co-inhere in each other, whether they are aware of it or not, then St. Augustine was right to say that when Adam fell, all men fell - "'Omnes enim fuimus in illo uno quando omnes fuimus ille unus' - we were all in that one man when we all were that one man."[88] But Julian of Norwich is also right to say that "when Adam **fell**, God's Son fell. Because of the true unity which had been decreed in heaven, God's Son could not be dissociated from Adam. By Adam I always understand Everyman."[89] In order to redeem the Fall, God in the Person of His Son substituted Himself for man, and took upon Himself the consequences of the decision of all men in Adam to know the Good as evil. A new basis was thereby laid for the Co-in-

---

86. Wolters, p.144. Quoted by Williams, Forgiveness of Sins, p.120.
87. Williams, Image of the City, p.77.
88. Descent of the Dove, p.68.
89. Wolters, Revelations, pp.147-148. Quoted by Williams, Forgiveness of Sins, p.106.

herence of God and man. A person achieved union with the Incarnate God in so far as he was willing to carry the consequences of the Fall on behalf of his fellows. Co-inherence was no longer simply a metaphysical question. That remained, though the awareness of it had gone. Co-inherence now became a moral question, a matter of choice. It measured the degree to which men were willing to become aware of the metaphysical fact which Adam had rejected, to become aware of it in a new activity of love. In so far as they continued to reject it there was separation from the true principle of the universe. This constituted evil. But, whereas Julian of Norwich located the source of man's continuing separation from God in his "sensuality," and declared that "we can never be completely holy... until our sensuality has been raised to the level of our substance";[90] Williams asserts that "matter and 'nature' have not, in themselves, sinned; what has sinned is spirit, if spirit and matter are to be regarded as divided."[91] By what is tantamount to locating the "divine spark" of traditional mysticism, not in the soul but in the body, Williams finally demonstrates why asceticism is no necessary part of the life of the mystic. His monism has consistently and determinedly refused that dualism which seemed to make asceticism desirable.

---

90. Wolters, p.161.

91. Quoted by Williams, Image of the City, p.76.

Gradually, throughout his various writings, Charles Williams elaborated upon the importance of matter, and defined with increasing precision the part it has to play in a man's or a woman's salvation. For him, matter is generally equated with body, and it is in this sense mainly that I intend to discuss it. The body is not to be the neglected partner of the mind. Spirit is active in both; but, whereas traditionally spirit tended to be associated with the intellectual rather than the physical sphere, Williams frequently suggests that the body may be more aware of the Good than the mind is. Like the mind, the body has the ability to see. In The Greater Trumps it is said of "the unknown philosopher who had wrought the Tarot images" that his hands "perhaps had guided his mind as much as his mind his hands."[1] Even Mr. Coningsby, in that novel, wondered for a moment whether "hands were eyes."[2] But it is with respect to sex that Williams most clearly enunciated this principle. Betty, one of a group of three girls in All Hallows' Eve, is being sent into a magical trance by her father, Simon the Clerk. His wish is to send her soul into the world of spirit that he might through her gain foreknowledge of the future. The spell he directs at Betty soothes her. Nevertheless,

---

1. Greater Trumps, p.193.
2. Ibid., p.205.

> something interfered with the words. Her hands, quiet though they lay, were strangely warm, and the blood in them seemed to beat. Her body (though she did not then realize it) held a memory that her mind had forgotten. The strength of Jonathan's hands was still in her own, and rose up her arms, and stirred in her flesh. His voice, still subconditionally remembered in her ears, stirred her corridors. She did not think of it but all her living body answered "Jonathan!" and on that cry rose against the incantation that all but appeased her.[3]

Betty had recently become engaged to an artist called Jonathan Drayton. Part of their relationship already was physical. They had reached that stage, which Williams, in connection with another couple, described in these terms : "their hands and their mouths, their voices and their glances, were familiar. All but the sovereign union had been theirs,..."[4] A physical relationship is important to Williams because he had his own distinctive philosophy of sex. While discussing the asceticism of the hermits of the Thebaid, Williams says :

> Sex - the poor ignorant creatures thought - was one of the greatest, most subtle, and most lasting of all distractions; nor had the Church... shown any striking sign of intending to exhibit it as sometimes the greatest, most splendid, and most authoritative of all inducements.[5]

The whole sexual activity is of the first importance not so much because it procreates the human race, but because of the significance of

---

3. All Hallows' Eve (London: Faber and Faber, 1945), p.69.
4. Many Dimensions, p.250.
5. Descent of the Dove, p.56.

the method whereby that procreation is achieved. In order to appreciate this fully, it is necessary to recapitulate a little.

As I said at the conclusion of my previous chapter, the metaphysical basis of the universe is the co-inherence of body and soul in man, of man in the incarnate God, and of men in each other. Because God recognised this fact, He substituted Himself in the Person of the Son for man, and suffered the death of the cross on his behalf. He took upon Himself man's burden of sin. If a man is willing to recognise the metaphysical co-inherence of the universe, the way open to him is to acknowledge the central substitution of God for him at Calvary, and to co-inhere in that substitution by virtue of substituting himself, in turn, for his fellows. This is the way of salvation. At the practical level this takes the form of a process which Williams called "exchange";[6] that is, someone carries your burden whatever it happens to be, and you carry someone else's. The clearest exposition of Williams's peculiarly literal interpretation of this fundamentally Christian doctrine is to be found in Descent into Hell. There the poet, Peter Stanhope, helps a young woman, Pauline Anstruther, to come to grips with a serious problem which has been distressing her. She is haunted by a "doppelgänger,"[7] by an image of herself which frequently materialises before her when she is out of doors on her own. She is greatly afraid of it. Up to the time at which she confides in Peter Stanhope,

---

6. See Williams's essay, "The Way of Exchange," Image of the City, pp.147-154.

7. Descent into Hell, p.19.

she has not as yet ever had to confront her other self face to face; but this ultimate meeting she feels is inevitable. Stanhope offers to carry her fear for her. He asks :

> "Haven't you heard it said that we ought to bear one another's burdens?... I think when Christ or St. Paul, or whoever said bear, or whatever he Aramaically said instead of bear, he meant something much more like carrying a parcel instead of someone else. To bear a burden is precisely to carry it instead of. If you're still carrying yours, I'm not carrying it for you - however sympathetic I may be.... You must give your burden up to someone else, and you must carry someone else's burden. I haven't made the universe and it isn't my fault. But I'm sure that this is a law of the universe, and not to give up your parcel is as much to rebel as not to carry another's."[8]

This theme is the central one in the salvation of several of the heroines of Williams's fiction. I shall return to the full implications of it when I deal with Williams's views on salvation and damnation.

Meanwhile, to return to Williams's philosophy of sex, the point which he endeavours to make is this : nature in the primary activity of sexual reproduction exhibits the essential features of that co-inherence which ought to prevail in spiritual affairs.

> Before any child can be born, the masculine seed has to be received by the feminine vessel. The man is quite helpless to produce a child unless he surrenders the means to someone else; the woman is as helpless unless she receives the means from someone else. It is a mutual act - but not only in the

---

8. Ibid., pp.98-99.

> sense that two people agree to do something together. They do do something together, but they do it by an act (as regards the child) of substitution. It is not two people carrying a burden at the same time; the mother carries, literally, the burden.... The value of the sexual act itself is a kind of co-inherence; the two participators intend (violence apart) a renewal of mutual vigour from the most extreme intimacy of physical relationships. With conception comes the physical inherence of the child. And this is renewed through all the generations;...[9]

If Williams had adhered to the outlook of the homily of the Thebaid, then there would have been little value to be found in sexual activity, however much it could have been reduced to an allegory of spiritual affairs. But Williams's view was that sexual love is the basis of natural affection between man and woman, and that this is but the first stage on the road to a full appreciation of love (a synonym for "God").[10] In The Figure of Beatrice Williams frequently uses two terms, "natural" and "archnatural,"[11] to express his understanding of the universe in its totality. Elsewhere he has said that "it is a little unfortunate that in ordinary English talk the words 'natural' and 'supernatural' have come to be considered as opposed rather than as complementary. Something like it has happened with those other words 'nature' and 'grace,'..."[12] Later he wrote, "nature and grace are categories of one

---

9. Williams, Image of the City, p.130.
10. See Greater Trumps, p.125.
11. The Figure of Beatrice: A Study in Dante (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), p.289.
12. Williams, Image of the City, p.75.

Identity."[13] Therefore presumably, "natural" and "supernatural" or "archnatural," are descriptive of "categories of one Identity." Since it is Williams's view that it was the "will of man" which sinned; and that this is "a spiritual quality"; then, it "was not the power which we call the flesh" but "the 'supernatural' which sinned."[14] Therefore, Redemption may quite easily commence with an insight (almost an instinct) at the "natural" level and advance from there to the "archnatural." This ought to be the progress of human love between the sexes, of "romantic love."[15]

To realize this development is not easy, and it is with its achievement that Charles Williams is primarily concerned. For Nancy Coningsby the first stage has been reached in her affection for Henry Lee. But her aunt Sybil draws the distinction carefully between this inchoate "romantic love," and the mature realization of the principle of Love. Aunt and niece are talking in the former's bedroom one morning before breakfast.

> "I don't think you're particularly selfish," her aunt said, "only you don't love anyone."
>
> Nancy looked up, more bewildered than angry. "Don't love?" she said. "I love you and father and Ralph very much indeed."
>
> "And Henry?" Sybil asked.

---

13. Williams, p.70.
14. Williams, p.77.
15. Religion and Love in Dante: The Theology of Romantic Love (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1942), p.3. Hereafter cited as Religion and Love.

"Well - Henry," Nancy said, blushing a little, "is dif-ferent."

"Alas!" Sybil murmured, but the lament was touched with laughter.

"What do you mean - 'alas'?" Nancy asked. "Aunt Sybil, do you want me to feel about everybody as I do about Henry?"

"A little adjustment here and there," Sybil said, "a re-tinting, perhaps, but otherwise - why, yes! Don't you think so?"[16]

Later, a hint is given that this very process is at work in Nancy her-self. Henry has been stopped by her in his magical evocation of a storm intended to kill Mr. Coningsby; and she is now attempting to include Nancy with her in an endeavour to redeem the situation. Henry is hesitant about the method Nancy has suggested:

"Perhaps even this isn't a way."

"Well, perhaps it isn't," she answered. "But ... if we mean to love - "

"Do you love me still then?" he asked.

"I never loved you more and yet I never loved you less," she told him. "... And, anyhow, I wasn't thinking of you, so there!"[17]

Her love of Henry is one thing, but if it is going to mature then it must become "inclusive" as well as "exclusive," to use a favourite an-tithesis of Williams's. Not only must Henry be the "particular" object of Nancy's affection; but this affection must so expand as to become

---

16. Crowded Trumps, pp.68-69.
17. Ibid., pp.146-147.

"universal" in its application within the context of her life.[18] It is to this process of growth in Honey that Sybil is referring when she says that "being in love is a tiring business - I mean getting into love."[19]

In the spiritual development of Sybil Coningsby, "her youthful reading of Dante"[20] had played a prominent part. Williams, himself, used Dante as the chief authority for his exposition of the development of human affection into a divinely inspired goodwill, from "eros" into "caritas." However, Williams would not have emphasised the difference between these two terms.[21] In C.E. Rolt's translation of Dionysius the Areopagite, a footnote occurs in which eros is said to be used on occasion with respect to God instead of agape (or caritas).[22] Dionysius quotes a famous but ambiguous statement made by St. Ignatius,[23] which Williams in The Descent of the Dove renders as, "My Eros is crucified."[24] Williams complains that "we, who have too much separated our own physical nature from Christ's, cannot easily read an identity into the two meanings [of 'Eros']. But they unite.... The physical and the spiritual are no longer divided...."[25] According to Williams, Dante was

---

18. See He Came Down from Heaven, p.25.
19. Greater Trumps, p.116.
20. Ibid., pp.124-125.
21. See He Came Down from Heaven, p.95.
22. Rolt, Dionysius, p.105, n^2.
23. Rolt, p.104.
24. Descent of the Dove, p.46.
25. Loc. cit.

concerned with the demonstration of this union. I do not intend to evaluate Williams's appreciation of Dante, as I am not competent. My aim is simply to elucidate the "pattern"[26] which Williams claimed to have discovered in Dante. Williams starts from what he termed the "Beatrician state," [27] that is "that human experience of 'falling-in-love,' from which Dante's own imagination began to work and the process and final possibilities of which he explored."[28] In the Vita Nuova Dante describes the effect upon him of "falling-in-love" with a Florentine girl called Beatrice. "He adored the Glory in Beatrice... he became the Glory in himself by a simple communication of grace."[29] For a moment, Dante saw Beatrice transfigured. Williams's emphasis is that this experience is common and natural. "The present point about the work of this great poet is that it refers us not to a rare human experience but to a common [one] ...."[30] This transfiguration of the object of adoring love is what Taliessin is referring to when he says that for him the princess Blanchefleur "walked dropping light, as all our beloved do" (TTL, 73). This was the experience of Palomides when he first saw the queen Iseult : there was then no division "between / the queen's substance and the queen" (TTL, 37). The spiritual and the physical aspects of Iseult were momentarily seen as one. There are two

---

26. Religion and Love, p.5.
27. He Came Down from Heaven, p.79.
28. Religion and Love, p.5.
29. Ibid., p.10.
30. Figure of Beatrice, p.11.

possible ways of looking at this phenomenon : one is to recognise it as a vision of the beloved in her *pre-lapsarian* state, before the supernatural became the natural; or to take it as a glimpse of love, the principle of the universe, incarnate in flesh, that is, the state to which the natural ought to aspire.[31] The latter was Dante's way. Seeing Beatrice one day following another Florentine girl called Joan down the street, he likened the former to Christ following John the Baptist in time. Williams wrote in his commentary that "what Dante is now doing is to identify the power which reposed in Beatrice with the nature of our Lord."[32] She becomes an image, in flesh-and-blood, of God. The great endeavour of the mature lover is to see all people as potentially images of God, and to treat them accordingly.[33] But to achieve this the lover has himself somehow to aspire to participate in that "nature of our Lord" which he has seen in his particular "Beatrice." Dante says of Beatrice that when "she met him in the street and said good-morning, he was so highly moved that he was, for the moment, in a state of complete goodwill, complete <u>caritas</u> towards everyone."[34] Beatrice is not only an image of love incarnate, she is also the "Mother of Love" in him.[35] Therefore, it is no surprise to find that the logical outcome of Dante's passion for Beatrice is that the

---

31. Ibid., pp.47-48.
32. <u>Religion and Love</u>, p.11.
33. See Williams, <u>Image of the City</u>, p.87.
34. <u>Religion and Love</u>, p.9.
35. <u>Figure of Beatrice</u>, p.29.

lattor is roplacod in the highost sphoro of Paradiso by Mary, the Mothor of God. "Thoro follows the profound and mystical final substitution. The eyes of Beatrice have been the sign and means of ascent in experience;... [Yet] it is the mortal maternity of Godhood that is here expressed."[36] It is she who enabled Dante to attain to the final vision of the Godhead. As he gazed he became aware that the Godhead seemed to be "limned with our image."[37] The final achievement of the way of "romantic love" is to realise that man co-inheres in God, because Christ in His love took "the manhood into God."[38] But this vision can only be achieved by man, if he first of all has recognised his need to co-inhere in other people through the activity of love which Christ demonstrated to mankind in his life, death, and resurrection. This ultimate state Williams terms "beatitude," and describes it as the "proper relationship between man and man and man and God.... those [relationships] may well be named the in-othering of men and the in-Godding of men."[39] For both of these, in Dante's case, Beatrice was initially responsible. Not only did she beget the first seed of love in him, that is, be responsible for the "in-Godding" of Dante; but also his affection for her produced in him a spirit of goodwill towards all men, his first inclination towards the "in-othering" of himself.

---

36. Religion and Love, p.39.
37. Dorothy L. Sayers and Barbara Reynolds, trans. The Divine Comedy 3 Paradise, Penguin Books, 1962, Canto XXXIII, line 131, p.346.
38. From the Athanasian Creed, quoted by Williams, Image of the City, p.68.
39. Figure of Beatrice, p.190.

Williams has termed the pattern which he traces in the works of Dante, the "Way of the Affirmation of Images." He uses the term interchangeably with that of the "Way of Affirmation."[40] For Dante, Beatrice was the most important "image." Williams writes:

> The word image is convenient for two reasons. First, the subjective recollection within him [that is, Dante] was of something objectively outside him; it was an image of an exterior fact and not of an interior device. It was sight and not invention.... Secondly, the outer shape was understood to be an image of things beyond itself.[41]

Therefore, an "image" is some fact of human life which to an extent reflects divine reality. Williams applied this concept to the human body and declared that the "structure of the body is an index to the structure of a greater whole."[42] It "carries its own high doctrine - of vision, of digestion, of mysteries, of balance, of movement, of operation."[43] Williams does insist that a "good index can indeed be studied in itself."[44] The fact that the body exhibits in itself principles which apply to the organization of the universe does not reduce it merely to an illustration of the greater whole. Similarly, with a human love-affair. An important point in Williams's treatment of Dante

---

40. Ibid., e.g. pp.100, 51, resp.
41. Ibid., p.7.
42. Williams, Image of the City, p.61.
43. Williams, p.67.
44. Williams, loc. cit.

in his re-interpretation of the feminine reality of Beatrice. The emphasis in Williams's commentary on the reappearance of Beatrice before Dante at the conclusion of the Purgatorio is that "it is a woman who speaks."[45] That which ultimately asserts the intrinsic value of human life is, for Williams, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body as "the glorious and holy flesh";[46] and the fact that a "'new earth' was promised as well as 'a new heaven'."[47]

The Paradiso is the culmination of Dante's treatment of the Affirmation of Images, and Williams says of it that it is "an image of a redeemed love-affair - that is, of an ordinary love-affair, if things went as they ought to go."[48] This statement has to be taken in conjunction with Williams's assumption that the most natural manner of interpreting the Dantean pattern is to understand it in relation to marriage. In a footnote Williams has written that "marriage is, partly at least, a recovery of matter; where there is no matter there is no marriage."[49] Williams's assumption is based upon the fact that the "physical union which is permitted, encouraged, and indeed made part of the full 'salute' of that first experience [of the 'Beatrician state'] is to be forbidden to any other way [than that of marriage]."[50] Therefore, if "that first

---

45. Religion and Love, p.29.
46. Paradiso, Canto XIV, line 45, trans. Williams, Religion and Love, p.33.
47. Williams, Image of the City, p.76.
48. Figure of Beatrice, p.192.
49. Ibid., p.51.
50. Ibid., p.49.

experience" is "a normal part of an ordinary healthy life",[51] then the most likely outcome of it will be marriage; and this will be an experience initially physical but potentially spiritual. The conclusion to be drawn from all this is that for Williams the Way of the Affirmation of Images is at its most typical a Way which is initiated by a type of transcendent experience (the "Beatrician state"), and which is expressed in an activity involving material existence (marriage). This is Williams's claim despite the fact that for his principal authority, Dante, marriage was not (so far as his literary activity is concerned) a part of the Way. Williams does say that Dante could have adopted the Way of Rejection when Beatrice died, as he claims Ignatius Loyola did when active life turned sour upon him. Instead, Dante chose to write the Divine Comedia, "to follow, by his own particular duty, the Way of the Affirmation of Images."[52] It is clear that at this stage in Williams's thought to follow the Way of the Affirmation of Images did not mean to be a symbolist poet, but simply to be a poet. Immediately, one is reminded of an earlier definition that Williams gave of the Way of Affirmation : it "was to affirm all things orderly until the universe throbbed with vitality.... [it] was to develop great art and romantic love and marriage and philosophy and social justice...."[53] There is a difference between affirming every Good in respect of God, and developing every

---

51. Religion and Love, p.6.
52. Figure of Beatrice, p.100.
53. Descent of the Dove, p.58.

Good in practical existence. The former is traditionally part of the Contemplative life, the latter of the Active life. When Williams uses the term, the Way of Affirmation, he is employing terminology traditionally associated with the Contemplative life. Yet he applies this term to his own peculiar understanding of the Active life. The shift in emphasis from the medieval position which is thus discernible in Williams is a result of his belief that the experiences of the Contemplative may be enjoyed equally well by a person who is still living very much in the world.

In my previous chapter I tried to demonstrate at some length the mystical nature of the experiences of certain of Williams's characters; and to show that this was not alien to a life of activity in the world. It is my belief that Williams's aim was to prove the validity of mysticism in a life of ordinary activity. F.C. Happold, in his study of mysticism, has this illuminating observation :

> To the mysticism of understanding and knowledge and of union and love I would add the mysticism of action. It is not a separate type, but originates in the first two and is their expression in the temporal world. I would extend it beyond the high, creative, selfless manifestation of Divine love as it is seen in a St. Bernard or a St. Catherine of Genoa, which is its supreme manifestation. I would call it the Lesser Mystic Way - the word "lesser" implies no value-judgement. It is a way of ordinary living, but one inspired and controlled by the particular sort of insight, however slight... termed mystical. It is the outward expression of a particular view of the world.[54]

54. Happold, pp.101-102.

This brings one close to the heart of Charles Williams's chief concern. In contrast with Dionysius the Areopagite or a modern writer such as A.E. Waite,[55] Williams's emphasis is not upon the zero state achieved by the few, but upon the common experience which may be apprehended in a heightened fashion by the many. Hence, his stress upon the ordinariness of Dante's initial experience of "romantic love," and upon the naturalness of marriage as "a Way of the Soul."[56] Hence, his attempt in his novels to embody his ideas in terms of the lives of ordinary men and women. Williams constantly denies the need for any extraordinary qualifications as the basis of a person's spirituality - his motto might be that dictum of Sir Joshua Reynolds' which is constantly upon the lips of Jonathan Drayton in All Hallows' Eve, namely, "common observation and a plain understanding",[57] as the basis of spirituality as of painting. Chloe Burnett, one of the characters in Williams's fiction to achieve a profoundly mystical experience, is just "a modern normally emotional girl."[58] Nancy Coningsby, who, even at the end of The Greater Trumps, is still a very ordinary girl in many respects, nevertheless has an experience nearly equivalent to "the Darkness of Unknowing"[59] of Dionysius

---

55. See Rolt, Introduction to Dionysius, p.47; and Arthur E. Waite, Preface to The Hidden Church of the Holy Graal (London, 1909), pp.xiii-xiv. A.E. Waite was an extremely prolific writer on mysticism and the occult during the first quarter of this century. Williams knew Waite personally. See Hadley, Image of the City, pp. xxiii-xxv.

56. Religion and Love, p.4.

57. See e.g. All Hallows' Eve, p.30.

58. Many Dimensions, p.79.

59. Rolt, Dionysius, p.194.

the Areopagite : "now, now, as the last shreds of golden mist faded... throbbing and glad, she came into the dark stillness which awaited her."[60] A slight problem arises when one comes to consider a situation such as that of the conversion of the "serving-maid" in the poem, The Hawk of Perceivale. The Archbishop asks her : "'Hast thou seen so soon, bright face, the light of Christ's glory?'" (TH, p. 46). An instance such as this approaches closely the Evangelical's basic insistence upon a personal experience of God for salvation; but this latter experience is not regarded by students of the subject as a necessarily mystical one.[61] Another test-case might be the conversion of Damaris Tighe in The Place of the Lion. There it is an overwhelming sense of revulsion at the vileness of her own selfishness which transforms Damaris's character. This is expressed in a desire to help Anthony Durrant's friend, Quentin Sabot, in his mad frenzy of fear. I suspect that Williams would not stop to argue whether such cases could be said technically to involve mystical experience. For him it would probably be enough that "the new self" was firmly set upon "the new way";[62] that self-love had given place to love of others, and ultimately to love of God. He would agree with F.C. Happold that the "mysticism of action" "is the outward expression of a particular view of the world";[63] and he would look to "the outward expression" to validate the mystical experience. Perhaps there

---

60. Exemplar Emmus, p.191.
61. Spencer, p.268.
62. He Came Down from Heaven, p.65.
63. Happold, p.102.

was wisdom in Williams coining the term, the Way of the Affirmation of Images; for that interpretation of mysticism to which he gave prominence was, if not unique, at least his own in the peculiarly vivid expression he gave to it. For Williams, the Way of the Affirmation of Images was a mode of sanctity, one highroad leading to the City of God.

The concept of the civitas Dei is an extremely important one in the thought of Charles Williams. He adopted the traditional dichotomy of two opposed cities as this had been enunciated in Christian terms by St. Augustine. These are the civitas terrena (the earthly city) and the civitas divina (the heavenly city). It is with the definition of the latter that Williams is primarily concerned. The heavenly city, or, as Williams prefers, the City, is ultimately the equivalent of "the Communion of Saints."[64] To enter it is to achieve salvation, and its doctrine is "that no man lives to himself or indeed from himself."[65] That is to say that co-inherence is the principle governing the City. At the practical level as opposed to the metaphysical, this takes the form of "exchange and substitution".[66] But first it is necessary to say that the City is characterized by that "civil union of the living and the dead" which Williams claimed is hinted at in T.S. Eliot's The Family Reunion.[67] Moreover, simultaneity is also a feature of the City.[68]

---

64. Williams, Image of the City, p.110.
65. Williams, p.104.
66. Descent into Hell, p.102.
67. Williams, Image of the City, p.101.
68. Williams, p.110.

though this is experienced by most of Williams's characters rather as a greater freedom within the context of time than as a complete transcendence of it. One of Williams's clearest expositions of the nature of the City forms the central incident in Descent into Hell. A workman had committed suicide during the building of "the houses of the new estate"[69] at Battle Hill. After his death he continued to haunt Battle Hill, until one night "he had seen, if only in a fading apparition, the tender eyes of love."[70] He had found himself looking through a window into the eyes of Margaret Anstruther - an old lady on the point of death, but an old lady who already belonged to the City. The workman "had run in his life after other men, and in his second life away from other selves. His inept mind had been little use to him. It had been trying to please others or himself, naturally and for a long time." With his first introduction to love he "was relieved of this necessity."[71] He decided to act, and without any clear formulation of intention, he re-entered the world of the living at the very spot where he had committed suicide. "He had the City in his mind."[72] The "City" here refers to London, but to that earthly city as an image of the heavenly one. The person whom the workman asked to direct him to London is Pauline Anstruther, the girl whose burden of fear Peter Stanhope, the poet, is carrying. She directs the workman on his road,

---

69. Descent into Hell, p.26.
70. Ibid., p.153
71. Ibid., p.152.
72. Ibid., p.156.

and calls after him, "in an act of remembered goodwill : 'Go in peace'."[73] Stanhope had paid her this courtesy of the City but an hour before at the most.[74] At the moment of saying this, Pauline becomes aware of a figure ahead of her towards whom she is involuntarily running. Her fear is that this figure is her "doppelgänger," that other self which haunts her; and which at last she seems to be in danger of meeting face to face. Instead, it proves to be an ancestor of hers who was martyred during the Marian persecutions. The moment of recognition comes when the figure cries out : "'Lord God! Lord God!'" "The cry freed her from fear and delirium, as if it took over its own from her."[75] Pauline offers her ancestor help, and takes "her place at the marble of exchange."[76] The person who in fact makes the offer is Pauline's other self, which turns out to be her true self : that Pauline Anstruther who is already, by virtue of her recognition of the principle of co-inherence, a member of the City. For Pauline, in her other self, "had all her life carried a fear which was not her fear but another's, until in the end it had become for her in turn not hers but another's."[77] "The moment of goodwill in which she had directed to the City the men who had but lately died had opened to her the City itself, the place of the present and all the past."[78] This was the place where she had

---

73. Ibid., p.167.
74. Ibid., p.163.
75. Ibid., p.168.
76. Ibid., p.169.
77. Ibid., p.170.
78. Ibid., p.169.

been able to carry another's burden for him, in exchange for the one another was carrying for her. This was the place where "substituted love"[79] finally became the reality of life for her. In that moment her "doppelgänger" sang : "I have seen the salvation of my God."[80]

Writing in connection with Evelyn Underhill, Williams says that "there is but one outer test of true faith - 'the incessant production of good works'...."[81] Elsewhere he says that the "pattern of the glory is a pattern of acts."[82] This emphasis upon Christian activity is consistent with the thought of St. Augustine. In an article which Williams is known to have read occurs the following paraphrase of St. Augustine's thought :

> ... we can and ought even in the mortal sickness of human civilization to heal, cherish, amend, as much as stands in our power.... It is not enough that the Christian - as though he were certain of his citizenship in the Civitas divina - lives religiously in the world above instead of in the world below....[83]

It is, in fact, against such an extreme interpretation of the Contemplative life as St. Augustine would seem here to be censuring, that Williams is to a great extent reacting. For instance, he writes that

---

79. Ibid., p.172.

80. Ibid., p.170.

81. Introduction to The Letters of Evelyn Underhill (London: Longmans, Green, 1943), p.16.

82. He Came Down From Heaven, p.97.

83. Ernst Hoffman, "Platonism in Augustine's Philosophy of History," Philosophy and History, ed. R. Klibansky and H.J. Paton (New York, 1963 [Oxford, 1936]), p.176. See Descent of the Dove, p.71, fn.

"It is not possible for the Christian to attend only to man and woman (any) and not at all to God in Himself. But neither is it possible for him to attend only to God in Himself and not at all to man and woman."[84] In itself, this emphasis upon a Christianity which expresses itself in the activity of love was fundamental to the spirituality of the Middle Ages. Where Charles Williams moves away from the mediaeval concept is in his attitude to the laity. According to Gregory the Great (died A.D. 604), there were three orders of society : the laity, the clergy, and the monastics. For man to return to God, two ways of life were open to him : the Active and the Contemplative. Dom Jean Leclercq in Part I of The Spirituality of the Middle Ages has this to say of St. Gregory's attitude :

> In a general way the impression he gives is that the active life is ordered to the salvation of our neighbour by our labours, and the contemplative to our own salvation through the work of prayer.[85]

He adds that in St. Gregory's usage "the two lives are two kinds of activity - association and prayer - and in this sense they are complementary..."[86] The Contemplative life is characteristic of monastics. What may be termed "the mixed life" is characteristic of the clergy : that is, they try "to keep alive the desire for contemplation," even while pre-occupied with "the care of souls." "The contemplative life ... is

---

84. Williams, Image of the City, p.195.
85. A History of Christian Spirituality, II (London, 1968), p.10.
86. Spirituality of the Middle Ages, p.10.

open to all men, including the laity...."[97] Here Williams would wholeheartedly agree, but there is a subtle difference between the medieval position and his. Whatever activity the lay person might be involved in, it was assumed that this would be ascetic in character. In my previous chapter I have tried to show that Williams rejected asceticism as a necessary pre-requisite for mystical experience. This opens the door to all those lay people debarred from the Contemplative life not just because they are active in helping others; but because they are in full enjoyment of the married state, are taking pleasure in the various cultural entertainments of the day, and are leading as comfortable lives as is compatible with general standards of morality. For Williams, Evelyn Underhill was probably an excellent example of a person who both knew the higher reaches of Contemplation, and yet had no obviously ascetic element in her mode of life. The Active life is not only a life of service, though that is a defining characteristic of it. A definition of it which would satisfy Williams would also have to allow for the healthy pursuit of <u>all</u> normal human activities provided these were not morally wrong. Further, Williams sees no reason why a person leading this kind of life should not also be capable of mystical experience such as has been traditionally associated with the Contemplative life. Williams's Way of Affirmation is one which combines the Active life as I have just defined it with something of the intense spiritual experience of the Contemplative life.

---

97. Ibid., p.11.

In order to show the extent of the shift in emphasis which Williams have achieved, let me quote T.S. Eliot's definition of a "mystic" - "a man wholly detached from this world, detached from private affections and public activity, a man wholly dedicated to contemplation..."[88] Williams believed that mysticism, no matter how little the degree to which it is experienced, can inform one's life with a remarkable new sense of purpose and power. For this reason, he was anxious that it should be experienced by as many people as possible; and to achieve this, he worked hard to remove the barriers traditionally surrounding it.

In the light of this, it is no surprise to find that Williams lays great stress upon the importance of the laity. This stress, however, is suggested rather than explicitly stated. Apart from the Archdeacon of Pavilion, all Williams's chief exponents of the City, in his novels at least, are lay figures. Thus, in Shadows of Ecstasy, the clergyman, Ian Galbraes, less truly embodies Williams's ideal than does Isabel Ingram. In The Descent of the Dove, while Williams says that the vocation of the priesthood must be respected, he also says that "anti-clericalism" is probably a proper, and indeed necessary, sentiment.[89] The final poem of the Taliessin cycle has Lancelot celebrating Mass, although "he was not sworn of the priesthood" (TKK, 89). This is very important as Williams, in this instance, has deliberately falsified Malory.

---

88. "The Significance of Charles Williams," The Listener, XXXVI, No.936 (December 19, 1946), 895.

89. Descent of the Dove, p.104.

In The Figure of Beatrice, Williams himself had even said : "'Sir Lancelot,' says Malory, 'took the habit of priesthood of the Bishop, and a twelve-month he sang mass.'"[90] A little later, Williams quotes from Dante's Convivio : "they who are married may also be professed of a good and true Order, for God wills nothing but that we should be professed in heart."[91] This "heart-profession"[92] entitles a person who does not belong to one of the Orders of the official church to belong instead to the "more secret Order of Affirmation."[93] It is of some such Order that Williams is speaking when he says of Evelyn Underhill and one of her friends that :

> They were both "members" (to use a too defining word) of an unorganized Confraternity which "worked in the hiddenness," and had "no propaganda, no public reunions, no rule but that of a common loyalty and intention and a mutual reverence and love." That intention was the achievement of the Union, in all proper degrees, after all proper methods, but especially on earth as it - now and already - is in heaven;... Such Confraternities, from time to time, exist - so unorganized, so hidden; they may not last; they spring and cease; but invisibly one succeeds to another; they are gates in the heart for the elect, who indeed become elect partly by their own election of such opportunities.[94]

This is very nearly an exact description of that "Confraternity" which

---

90. The Figure of Beatrice, p.63.
91. Loc. cit.
92. Loc. cit.
93. Ibid., p.100.
94. Introduction to Letters of Evelyn Underhill, p.39.

arose in Lagree from "the household of the king's poet." This "new company" was one :

> having no decision, no vote or election,
> but for the single note that any soul
> took of its own election of the way; the whole
> shaped no frame nor titular claim to place. (SS. 36)

The emphasis upon the non-institutional character of "the Company" (SS.41) reminds one forcibly of the fact that, for St. Augustine, the City was essentially "an invisible society,"[95] not strictly identifiable with the Church as an organization. Indeed, "the Company" may be regarded as another name for the City. However, an important difference in Williams's thought, as compared with St. Augustine's, should be noted. For the latter, the Church and the City were not synonymous because there were members of the Church who did not qualify to belong to the City.[96] On the other hand, one gathers the impression that there are members of Williams's Company who do not belong to the Church. The "first station" of the Company, its "strong base," is composed of those who live "by a frankness of honourable exchange" (SS.37). By this is meant those ordinary men and women who willingly recognize their mutual interdependence at all levels of life, whether among family or friends, or in society at large. These are the people who put their

---

95. Sir Ernest Barker, Introduction to St. Augustine, The City of God, Everyman's Library, 1945, I, xvii.

96. Barker, loc. cit. The city of God "cannot, in strictness, be identified with the Church, because the Church on earth contains baptized members who belong to its society, and yet are not righteous, and cannot therefore belong to the society of the city of God."

bent into the routine of existence. One such person is Dr. Rockbotham in The Place of the Lion. Damaris Tighe says that she used to consider him "rather a dull sort of fool." Now, as he goes unobtrusively about his business of caring for people's physical well-being, both she and Anthony Durrant are able to see him as "a good creature."[97] All Hallows' Eve has a very clear example of what Williams envisaged by the "first station" of the Company. Lady Wallingford and her daughter Betty are setting off on a train journey :

> Lady Wallingford said : "Get in, Betty. You travel first class as far as Laughton, you know." She added to a porter : "This part is for York?" The porter having just called out "Grantham, Doncaster, York", exercised a glorious self-restraint, and said : "Yes, lady." He spoke perhaps from habit, but here habit was full of all its past and all its patience, and its patience was the thunder of the passage of a god dominant, miraculous and yet recurrent. Golden-thighed Endurance, sun-shrouded Justice, were in him, and his face was the deep confluence of the City.[98]

There is no suggestion that this porter has any connection with the Church. Yet he does appear to be one who, in the words of St. Paul, does "by nature the things contained in the law." He is one of those who have "the law written in their hearts."[99]

The relationship of the Company to the Way of the Affirmation Images is a little difficult to determine. Williams has written that

---

97. Place of the Lion, p.195.
98. All Hallows' Eve, p.76.
99. Romans, II, 14 and 15 resp. (A.V.)

"justice, charity, union; these are the three degrees of the Way of the Affirmation of Images, and all of us are to be the images affirmed."[100] This corresponds exactly to the tripartite division of the Company which Williams gives in the poem which describes its founding (see SS. 37-39). The inevitable conclusion is that the Way of the Affirmation of Images is synonymous with the Way of the City or the Company. Yet, "the third station" of the Company, as well as including "a mechanic here, a maid there" and Taliessin himself, also includes Percivale and Dindrane who in a technical sense are supposed to follow the Way of Rejection (SS. 39). Perhaps, the reconciliation of these conflicting ideas is to be found in the statement of Dindrane to Taliessin when she is leaving him to enter "the convent at Almesbury" (SS. 29) : "'I will affirm, my beloved, all that I should.'" Taliessin replies : "'I will reject all that I should - / yes, and affirm...'" (SS. 34). Both Affirmation and Rejection to some extent involve their opposite. Moreover, "the two Ways" (SS. 33) are essentially complementary. For the most part, Williams, writing to redress an imbalance unfavourable to Affirmation, does not stress this feature. But a slave-girl in the poem, The Departure of Dindrane, has a vision of the true relationship of Affirmation to Rejection. She sees Taliessin and Dindrane "riding before her" hand-in-hand (SS. 32). She sees a "two-handed shape" (SS. 33) : "the Ways upon the Way" (SS. 32). Here Williams achieves a reconciliation. The City is seen to dissolve and absorb all distinction of Affirmation or Rejection. What concerns the City is "heart-profession." The only distinction ultimately is in the intensity of a person's activity in love.

---

100. Williams, Image of the City, p.150.

But, if a person rejects love, what then? Williams says that Christ "intimated, in the clearest words, the possibility of exclusion from the City; He called that exclusion Hell."[1] Moreover, there "is, in the end, no compromise between the two [the City and Hell]; there is only choice."[2] One either rejects self, and accepts the principle of substitution and exchange; or one prefers self, and denies the Co-inherence. The latter was the choice of Lawrence Wentworth, whose descent into Hell is traced in the novel of that name. Two factors initiated his descent : his antipathy towards a rival historian called Aston Moffatt, and his attraction towards a young woman called Adela Hunt. In both cases his feelings were entirely self-centred : "As Aston Moffatt was bound either to lessen or heighten Wentworth's awareness of his own reputation, so Adela was bound either to increase or abolish his awareness of his ego."[3] Adela's having a boyfriend, a certain Hugh Prescott, causes Wentworth to be consumed by jealousy. One night, he determined to spy upon the two as they returned from London by train. "A remnant of intelligence cried to him that this was the road of mania, and self-indulgence leading to mania."[4]

---

1. Williams, Image of the City, p.105.
2. Williams, p.103.
3. Descent into Hell, p.38.
4. Ibid., p.30.

He ignored his intelligence. "He desired hell."[5] This parallels the situation which Dante describes in the second circle of the Inferno. Here are "those who have loved by their own indulgence against the moral law."[6] This is the circle of Paolo and Francesca. The cause of their damnation is only "the prolongation of the self-indulged moment.... But that... is yet the very opening to all hell."[7] The career of Wentworth continues to follow the pattern outlined by Dante. To "prefer oneself alone" finally "leads... to hatred of others."[8] Wentworth, one evening, had read in a newspaper that Aston Moffatt had been awarded a knighthood. "He crushed the paper in a rage."[9] In that moment, he "had determined, then and for ever... that he would hate the fact, and therefore facts."[10] From that point onwards his life becomes one long surrender to self-delusion: "he died to things other than himself."[11] Of Dante's Inferno, Williams writes: "At the very bottom of hell everything changes. Noise ceases; fire vanishes; discussion disappears. Almost a different kind of life appears - the life of the utterly damned."[12] This was the fate that overtook Wentworth. By the end of the novel, he even has "no

---

5. Loc. cit.
6. Religion and Love, p.19.
7. Ibid., p.20.
8. Loc. cit.
9. Descent into Hell, p.80.
10. Ibid., p.81.
11. Ibid., p.87.
12. Religion and Love, p.23.

consciousness of himself as such."[13] He "waited for something to happen. The silence lasted; nothing happened.... he was drawn, steadily, everlastingly, inward and down through the bottomless circles of the void."[14] In much less detail, Williams had described in Many Dimensions the damnation of Sir Giles Tumulty : "From the spirals of time and place he felt himself falling, and still he fell and fell."[15] The end of the two men is the end of the damned in Dante's Inferno : "Hell is eternity without the quality of eternity; that is, it is mere monotonous and everlasting repetition."[16] According to Dionysius the Areopagite, "evil is Non-Existent."[17] It is the negation of the Good. Therefore, "if you wholly destroy the Good, there will be neither being, life, desire, nor motion, or any other thing."[18] This is the state of which Dmitri, the Greek, named Gregory Peredinnos in War in Heaven :

> It is all one; in the end it is all one.... in the end there is nothing at all but you and that which goes by. You will be sick at heart because there is nothing, nothing but a passing, and in the midst of the passing a weariness that is you. All things shall grow fainter, all desire cease in that sickness and the void that is about it.[19]

This is the state chosen by Wentworth and Sir Giles.

---

13. Descent into Hell, p.221.
14. Ibid., p.222.
15. Many Dimensions, p.246.
16. Religion and Love, p.24.
17. Rolt, Dionysius, p.117.
18. Rolt, p.115.
19. War in Heaven, p.145.

Williams repeatedly emphasises the fact that for any person who is slowly damning himself his descent is, in fact, a series of choices at any one of which the deterioration may be halted. Almost at the last moment, such an opportunity is again presented to Lawrence Wentworth. The last few minutes of his life are spent at a dinner held in honour of Sir Aston Moffatt. He is suddenly confronted by the latter. "The shock almost restored him. If he had ever hated Sir Aston because of a passion for austere truth, he might even then have laid hold on the thing that was absurd in the world and been saved."[20] This closely resembles a statement made by Dionysius : "anger hath a share in the good, in so far as it is a movement which seeks to remedy apparent evils, converting them to that which appears to be fair."[21] Not all of Williams's characters reject the chances of salvation offered to them. Dionysius wrote : "even he that desires the basest life, yet in so far as he feels desire at all and feels desire for life, and intends what he thinks the best kind of life, so far participates in the Good."[22] It is some such circumstance that avails in the case of Gregory Persimmons, and makes him surrender himself up to the police. He reflects :

> No power of destruction seemed to satisfy Nemesis's hunger. ... he felt that what was looking was delight..... he saw... in the midst of a flat circle of emptiness, the face of the Greek spewing out venom. Absurdly enough, he felt himself angered by the mere ugliousness of this..... Adrian must be

---

20. Descent into Hell, p.219.
21. Rolt, Dionysius, p.115.
22. Rolt, loc. cit.

> taught the wickedness of that - power was the purpose of spiritual things, and Satan the lord of power.[23]

For Gregory, hell was revealing itself to be a ghost. However monstrous his desire, Gregory certainly did not wish annihilation. As thus expressed in War in Heaven, Williams's idea is still rather crude; but by All Hallows' Eve it had taken on a deeper significance. There, Lady Wallingford is given another chance in life, since "she had desired the good of another and not her own, since she had indeed willed to give herself."[24] No matter in how distorted a form, her actions had had an affinity with the principle of substitution.

At any one of the moments in life where decision is required, to choose evil in preference to good is to be in hell. Thus Jonathon Drayton, fearful for the safety of his fiancée, Betty Wallingford, tries to prevent her from approaching Simon the Clerk, where he is practising the arts of Goetia. Jonathon calls out to her : "Don't; it's hell."[25] Lester Furnivall, earlier in that same novel, had desired that her husband would die so that "he should be there with her, prisoner with her, prisoner to her." She wished that he would join her in the realm of the dead for her own gratification. "She saw it clearly... this was what she wanted." But in the same breath she makes the following equation : "this was what she wanted; this was what she was.... she, being that, was damned.... she stood, in a trance of horror at herself or at

---

23. War in Heaven, pp.236-237.
24. All Hallows' Eve, p.238.
25. Ibid., p.229.

hell, or at both, being one."[26] Hell is a state of being, a state of being what one wants to be when one desires evil. One only knows what one always wanted to know. Lawrence Wentworth "refused to want anything but what he wanted."[27] At the end of his career he sees before him "a bobbing shape of black and white that hovered there";[28] he sees, though without recognition, only himself. Another way in which Williams experiences this same fact is to describe hell as a "return"[29] upon one of one's past. This is the case with Sir Giles Tumulty:

> That which he had been to men, that by which he had chosen to deal with others, by that he was to be dealt with in his turn.... He was conscious... of a myriad other Giles Tumulty, of childhood and boyhood and youth and age, all that he had ever been, and all of them were screaming.[30]

So too with Simon the Clerk. At the conclusion of All Hallows' Eve the two images of himself which the Clerk had created by magical means return upon him. "He hated them, and since they held his hate they hated him."[31] This is what Williams called in connection with Dante's Satan, the "cannibalism of the spirit."[32] Williams's final assertion would appear to be that in so far as annihilation is compatible with the laws of the universe, evil is ultimately self-destructive. Perhaps,

---

26. Ibid., p.85.
27. Descent into Hell, p.142.
28. Ibid., p.222.
29. All Hallows' Eve, p.221.
30. Many Dimensions, p.245.
31. All Hallows' Eve, pp.233-234.
32. Religion and Love, p.24.

it would be more accurate to say that hell is ultimately an "immortal falsity"[33] of self-destruction. This is the nemesis of self-love.

At the level of depicting evil at work in an individual Williams is successful. Where he begins to falter is when he tries to evoke the idea of evil as a force to be reckoned with in the world as a whole. He rejected any metaphysical dualism outright. Starting from this position he expounded his doctrine of the "nature of the Fall." God is the origin of All; and, therefore, in origin everything was good. "The Adam had been created, and were existing in a state of knowledge of good and nothing but good." "But they knew... that the knowledge in the Omnipotence was greater than theirs own; they understood that in some way it knew 'evil'."[34] Again, one is reminded of Dionysius saying that "God knows evil under the form of good."[35] But, for the Adam,

> to know evil... was to know it not by pure intelligence but by experience. It was, precisely, to experience the opposite of good, that is the deprivation of the good.... Since there was not - since there never has been and never will be - anything else than the good to know, they know the good as antagonism.[36]

This desire upon the part of man to know "good as evil"[37] is what in his poetry Williams calls man looking "on the Acts [of God] in contem-

---

33. All Hallows' Eve, p.236.
34. He Came Down from Heaven, p.19.
35. Holt, Dionysius, p.126.
36. He Came Down from Heaven, pp.20-21.
37. Ibid., p.22.

tion" (TTL. 10). Evil, therefore, springs from an action of man's. Williams proceeds to emphasise two aspects of evil in particular, both of which underline the futility of man's action : one is that evil is a negation of intelligence, and the other that it is a contradiction of fruitful physical life. Imbecility and obscenity are his terms for those features of evil. Both are present in Williams's description of the Emperor of P'o-lu in his Taliessin cycle. He is a "brainless form" and he "walks" with "indecent hands hidden under the cope" (TTL. 12). Essentially, both imbecility and obscenity are instances of negativity; but men often experience evil as a positive, rather than a negative, force in the world around them. Williams was aware of this, and desired to be comprehensive in his treatment of the subject. This presented real difficulties. He had declared that the "devil, even if he is a fact, has been an indulgence."[38] In The Greater Trumps, it is said that Sybil Coningsby, with whose views one can safely identify those of Williams himself, "didn't believe in the Devil."[39] Nancy Coningsby asks her fiancé, Henry Lee, about one of the Tarot cards :

> "The Devil - if it is a devil?" she said.
>
> "It is the unreasonable hate and malice which moves in us," he answered.[40]

This brings one to the position held by Dionysius : "In fine, Good cometh from the One universal Cause; and evil from many partial defici-

---

38. Ibid., p.10.

39. Greater Trumps, p.136.

40. Ibid., p.90. Italics mine.

ancies."[41] In his works, Williams always tended to see the Good in metaphysical, as well as natural, terms. On the other hand, he only saw evil in the latter terms, because he had completely rejected any metaphysical dualism, and, in consequence, any spiritual origin of evil. Had he always treated both the Good and evil at the natural level, then there would have been no difficulty. As it was, the Good always had an inbuilt advantage over evil, which made it very difficult for Williams to realise effectively the threat constituted by the latter.

One way in which he tried to overcome this problem was to exploit a certain *ambiguity* in the nature of evil. Dionysius had written that the "Good must be the beginning and the end even of all evil things. For the Good is the final Purpose of all things, good and bad alike."[42] The danger to which this position could give rise is that of universalism, by which is meant that in the end the whole creation will be saved. Two of the writers on mysticism whom Williams is known to have read tended towards this position, namely, Julian of Norwich and William Law. The Lady Julian balanced precariously on the brink, but ultimately adhered to orthodox dogma; William Law adopted universalism as his own belief.[43] Williams, himself, in one of his writings, said that the idea of the final redemption of all souls was a great temptation. He was unwilling, however, to adopt that as his own position. What he did do was to study, especially in his plays, the possibility of good

---

41. Rolt, Dionysius, p.126.
42. Rolt, p.127.
43. See Spencer, p.340.

arising from evil; or, to put it another way, to study the possibility of reversing the catastrophe of the Fall by knowing evil as good. This has been, for commentators on Williams, a favourite theme. The first clear indication of the idea occurs in an early play, The Rite of the Passion, where Satan is seen as an instrument of God's will, used to bring about "the Passion and the Crucifixion," "the Silence and the Rising again." Love asks:

> Say, what art thou, my angel Satan?

and he replies:

> . . . Lord
> I am thy shadow, only known as hell
> Where any linger from thy sweet accord.[44]

Satan only appears evil to those who continue to wish to know good as its opposite. For those who are in "sweet accord" with Love, Satan is the necessity to suffer tribulation in the achievement of Love's will. The most important statement of this theme is found in Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury. There the figure of the Skeleton says to Cranmer, "I am Christ's back." This reminds one of Satan who was Love's "shadow." In one sense, therefore, the Skeleton represents the "terror of the agonizing glory of grace." Speaking of itself it says, "I am the thing ... / that (seems it) thrives upon moans."[45] It is the hardship to be endured in the achievement of salvation. Julian of Norwich said that sin could "only be known by the pain it causes." This pain "purges us

---

44. The Rite of the Passion in Three Plays (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p.190.

45. Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury in Collected Plays (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p.54. All further references are to this edition.

and makes us know ourselves, so that we ask for mercy."[46] So the Skeleton is "the Judas who betrays man to God."[47] It says, "I am the way, the way to salvation." But it also says, "I am the way, the way to hell."[48] A little earlier it has said that it is either "God or the Devil."[49] Presumably, this refers to the fact that man can either choose to know the Good as good or as evil. But the ambiguity which remains is whether God is to be known as the source of evil as well as good. It is difficult to create a character which can be the means of the realization of both good and evil, without at the same time assuming of it a positive impetus towards both. In his maturest writing, Williams resolved this difficulty. For example, The House of the Octopus has an ambiguous figure called the Flame which stands for the compulsion of the Holy Spirit bringing men to repentance. The Flame, writes one critic, "stands opposite to us and opposed to us, thrusting us into intolerable positions, and shredding our old lives so that we are compelled to become new."[50] But that play also has "the infinite nameless Emperor" of P'o-l'u,[51] which figure comes as near to symbolizing a positive force for evil as Williams's monism could accept. Much

---

46. Wolters, Revelations, p.104.
47. Thomas Cranmer, p.35.
48. Ibid., p.13.
49. Ibid., p.6.
50. Mary McDermott Shideler, Charles Williams: A Critical Essay, Contemporary Writers in Christian Perspective (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1966), p.32.
51. The House of the Octopus in Collected Plays, p.269. Williams's spelling of "P'o-l'u" varies.

on the ambiguities of Dreamer have been admired. I feel that play falls short of the comprehensiveness of the treatment of evil found in The House of the Octopus. Consequently, though the former play is interesting, it is further removed than the latter from the truth of human experience. It is interesting to note that Williams intended to introduce a figure, similar in function to the Plano, into his Taliessin cycle. This was to be "Gawlon, the Invisible Knight," who was to be "Seton to us but the Holy Ghost to the supernatural powers."[52] The poems which were to have dealt with him were never written, leaving the cycle's treatment of evil less ambiguous than it might otherwise have been.

Before exploring further the evolution and nature of the Emperor of P'o-lu, I shall pause for a moment to look at what Williams did, in fact, conceive to be the nature of the final reconciliation of good and evil. In The Figure of Beatrice he writes that, "'sin shall have worship in heaven', as the Lady Julian said."[53] By this is meant that the inclusion of man with his sins in heaven is productive of "bliss" because of the "love" through which "the inclusion" has been accomplished.[54] Williams also says that, "even (mystically) hell is to be part of... [the] joy" of heaven.[55] Though this "is a Glory we cannot and ought not to endure,"[56] Williams did try to give expression to it. In

---

52. Williams, Image of the City, p.170.
53. Figure of Beatrice, p.220.
54. Forgiveness of Sins, p.105.
55. Ibid., p.103.
56. Ibid., p.104.

the poem, The Prayers of the Pope, he describes the ultimate defeat, or rather, neutralization of P'o-l'u. "The roots of Broceliande fastened" on "the tentacles" of "the giant octopods" of P'o-l'u. They were to be

> held so for ever
> to know for ever nothing but their own hypnotic
> sucking at the harsh roots... (SS. 59).

Thereafter, the "roses of the world bloomed from Dunna to Logres" (SS. 60). This is a vision of the accomplishment of God's will at the end of time, of the final re-assertion of the Good. It is the parallel in Williams to the Lady Julian's : "It is all going to be all right; it is all going to be all right; everything is going to be all right."[57] At the conclusion of this apocalyptic passage, the poem returns to the Pope who is praying. He is recalling Christ's harrowing of hell, and he prays :

> Thou hast spoken a word of power in the midst of hell,
> . . . . . .
> That Thou only canst be, Thou only
> everywhere art; let hell also confess thee,
> bless thee, praise thee, and magnify thee for ever. (SS. 60).

Williams expressed this idea in The Forgiveness of Sins when he wrote that "Saint John saw wisely when he saw for a moment the smoke of the torment going up for ever and ever before the Lamb and his angels, though that is impossible for any of us to understand and live."[58] Williams's

---

57. Wolters, Revelations, p.104. See Forgiveness of Sins, p.175.
58. Forgiveness of Sins, pp.103-104.

difficulty is that it may also be impossible to embody such an idea convincingly in poetry.

To return to the concept of P'o-l'u, this is an artistically satisfying invention to symbolise evil as it is apprehended within the context of time as distinct from eternity. With the idea of P'o-l'u is associated that of the occult, or of Gothic, as Williams preferred to call it. The agents of "the headless Emperor" (SH. 59) are not only "the hordes of the heathen" (SH. 54), but also "evil wizards" (SH. 53). Not only brutality, but spiritual perversion, are at his services; and it is the latter which almost overwhelms the Empire of Byzantium :

> Consuls and lords felt the cold coming
> and the drumming of the earth under the tribes, but they
> shrank
> only before the ghosts of the past - from graves
> drawn by malefic ant spells, but too-veritable ghosts
> before those hosts moving in a terrible twilight. (SH. 54)

The power of the image of evil in the Taliessin cycle derives from the variety of its components : there is in it the reality of human physical force, the veiled horror of black magic, and the undefined and indefinable otherness of P'o-l'u. On the other hand, in those novels where Williams attempts to give evil a status of its own, to elevate it into a principle against which the Good has to strive, he tends to depict it only in terms of black magic, depriving evil of the power of brute force and of a necessary monotonous. Characters such as Gregory Persimmons or Simon the Clerk are at one and the same time too inhuman and too human. As representatives of those who practise black magic,

they suffer from the scepticism with which most readers regard that art. They tend merely to excite curiosity at the esoteric nature of their practices: Gregory Forsimmons preparing himself for the Sabbath,[59] or Simon the Cloak attempting to kill Betty Wallingford by means of an effigy.[60] In such cases, the horror of the perversion is dissipated by Williams's over-precise enumeration of detail. One is not sufficiently conscious of an unfamiliar power working through the familiar. As correspondences, these characters are simply alien. Yet, they are not alien enough. Any power which could have been derived from introducing a factor foreign to normal human experience is lost in the fact that the foreign element is identified with all too human figures. They are not men dabbling in the supernatural so much as men playing with the unnatural. One knows that ultimately they have only their own resources to fall back upon. To some extent, however, Simon the Cloak does manage to convince. The reader is not quite certain, but what the Cloak is drawing upon resources beyond the range of normal human experience; and that these resources have, indeed, some strange power. When the Cloak multiplies himself to form a "triplicity,"[61] it is the reaction of Lady Wallingford which lends credence to the fact. She and the Cloak on the previous night had had, for the first time, sexual intercourse. Though Lady Wallingford remained for "the next one-and-twenty years" his devoted

---

59. War in Heaven, pp.71-77.
60. All Hallows' Eve, pp.214-216.
61. Ibid., p.104.

servant, "since that night there had been no physical intercourse between them. She - even she - could not have endured it."[62] The final chapter of the novel recounts the collapse of Simon. It is impressive despite the details of sympathetic magic. The reason is that the magic is, in a sense, irrelevant to the significance of the fate which engulfs both Simon and Lady Wallingford. This can be apprehended in terms of ordinary human psychology.

Where, in his novels, Williams does not attempt to represent evil as a distinct force in the world, his commonest approach is to depict it as an endeavour to obtain spiritual power by the wrong means and for the wrong ends. Williams called "the desire to know as gods" the "first and most dreadful error." "Men were never meant to be as gods or to know as gods."[63] Yet, this is the ambition, for example, of Henry Lee in The Greater Trumps. By using the Tarot cards he claims that there is "a way to all knowledge and prophecy" ; this is "to know as gods." When Nancy Coningsby asked him what his ultimate objective was ; "'Who knows?' he answered, rising on the wings of his own terrific dream. 'Create.'"[64] This is "to be as gods." To achieve his purpose, it is necessary that he understand the movements of a remarkable set of golden images which correspond to the Tarot cards. The latter are the key to the former. Henry believed that "everything which exists takes part in

---

62. Ibid., p.103.
63. He Came Down From Heaven, p.60.
64. Greater Trumps, p.51.

the movement of a great dance."[65] To this the movement of the images corresponds. He desires to "know - to see from within - to be aware of the dance."[66] Sybil Coningsby does not share Henry's wish to comprehend the secrets of the universe. In fact, she says to Henry that if the universe has "gone to all this trouble to keep the next minute quiet, it seems rude to force its confidence."[67] She almost appears to be echoing the words of the Lady Julian when the latter said of the future that "it is our Lord's own private matter, and it is the royal prerogative of God to be undisturbed in that which is his own business. It is not for his servant, obedient and reverent, to pry at all into these secrets."[68] As Henry understands the position, he can achieve his aim through the control of externals, through the control of the Events and the Images. After his attempt has failed he has a vision of the building of the Tower of Babel. Gradually, he no longer sees the Tower, for he is, himself, the Tower :

> he was petrified from loins to hand, himself a tower of stone. Even so, he meant to do something.... He was setting up a gigantic image of himself for heaven and earth to adore.... And then always, just as he felt his will becoming fixed and strong... something within him began to fail.... The stars were beyond his reach; Babel was for ever doomed to fall - ...[69]

---

65. Ibid., p.94.
66. Ibid., p.92.
67. Ibid., p.70.
68. Woltova, Revelations, p.107.
69. Greater Trumps, p.160.

Elsewhere Williams has said of "the destruction of Babel" that it is the "symbolic legend of the effort man makes to approach heaven objectively only.... if this or that could be done, surely the great tower would arise, and we should walk in heaven among gods...."[70] Instead, "the kingdom of God is within."[71] This is what Sybil Coningsby understood: "Equanimity in her was not a compromise but a union, and the elements of that union, which existed separately in others, in her recognized themselves, and something other than themselves, which satisfied them."[72] She lived, to use the term of Nicholas of Cusa, "beyond the coincidence of contradictories."[73] The diverse elements of human nature were in harmony within her. Internally, spiritually, she herself corresponded to the dance of the images. That which held together and composed the various movements of the images was the ubiquitous presence of the central figure called the Fool. This figure symbolises Love; and that "something other" which "satisfied" the disparate elements of Sybil Coningsby's nature is also Love.

The achievement of such a harmony is the theme of The Place of the Lion. In that novel, a man called Barlingew succeeds in making himself a means whereby the spiritual "Powers" which govern the universe may become incarnate in the form of that animal whose natural disposition most nearly resembles their particular virtues. Thus the principle of

---

70. He Came Down from Heaven, p.25.
71. Luke, xvii, 21 (A.V.).
72. Greater Trumps, p.109.
73. Quoted Hoppold, p.73.

strength manifests itself as a lion. When "that which is behind them [those spiritual powers] intends to put a new soul into matter it disposes them as it will and by a peculiar mingling of them a child is born ...."[74] None of these "Powers" in its undiluted essence dominates the nature of man. In him they are only known in harmony. At least, this is what ought to be. However, Berzinger's activity, by affording these "Archetypes"[75] an entrance into material existence, has upset the balance of creation. A certain Mr. Foster explains the situation to Anthony Durrant : "more and more everything will be received into its original, animals, vegetables, all the world but those individual results of Interior Powers which are men." According to Anthony, this "would mean destruction"[76] for the whole created universe. Foster says that men will fall into three groups : those who welcome the manifestation of the archetypal Powers, those who refuse to accept it as a fact, and those who hate and fear it. With the middle group I am not concerned. Evil becomes manifest in the world as the first group of men begins to prey upon the third group. Imaginatively, this is realized in the hunt of the demented Quentin Sabot by the bestial Mr. Foster.

Basing his argument upon the information supplied to him by Foster, Anthony Durrant says of these Powers that "... if they are part [of me], then perhaps the authority which is in me over me shall be in me over

---

74. Place of the Lion, p.53.
75. Ibid., p.74.
76. Ibid., p.53.

them'."[77] This reflection leads him to the following resolution :

> to remember that man was meant to control, to be lord of his own nature, to accept the authority that had been given to Adam over all manner of beasts, as the antique fables reported, and to exercise that authority over the giants and gods which were threatening the world.[78]

Thus the climax of the novel comes when Damaris Tighe, Anthony's fiancée, sees how in "the glade of the garden... the image of Adam named the beasts, and naming ruled them."[79] This vision which she has of Anthony is the visible counterpart to what he has already achieved within his own being.[80] This is to achieve what Williams in his Taliessin cycle calls "the right balance of the stresses" (TWL, 86).

Williams's treatment of the concept of spiritual Powers is based upon the Celestial Hierarchies of Dionysius the Areopagite. According to the latter, there were, between God and men, nine species of angelic creatures whose splendour decreased the further they were from God and the nearer they were to man. These powers act "as God's executive."[81] C.S. Lewis says of Dionysius that his "God does nothing directly that can be done through an intermediary";[82] and this is how these Powers function in relation to mankind. Lewis also says that Dionysius "differs from all earlier and some later authorities by declaring the angels

---

77. Ibid., p.57.
78. Ibid., p.75.
79. Ibid., p.204.
80. See Place of the Lion, p.191.
81. C.S. Lewis, The Discarded Image, p.74.
82. Lewis, p.73.

to be pure minds (*mentes*), unembodied."[83] This reminds one of an important point which Foster makes to Anthony Durrant. The former says:

> Now this world in which they [that is, the Powers] exist is truly a real world, and to see it is a very difficult and dangerous thing, but our master [Borringer] held that it could be done, and that the man who very wise who would consecrate himself to this end as part - and the chief part - of his duty on earth.[84]

He adds that "matter is the separation between [creation]... and the powers beyond";[85] or, as Lewis put it, those Powers are "unembodied." The whole plot of the novel suggests that there was a basic error in Borringer's approach to life. Any endeavour to obtain spiritual knowledge at the expense of destroying the world and causing men to destroy each other must be wrong. It would seem that Borringer was guilty of that curiosity of which the Lady Julian and Sybil Coningsby were both critical.

It is important to be clear as to what this curiosity really is. There are two sides to it. One is that which is exhibited, both in the career of Henry Lee and in that of Borringer's disciple, Foster (if not in that of Borringer, himself, as well). This is the desire to control the spiritual by means of the physical. In fact, this is the basis of all magic; and, as such, the latter is merely evil. The other side to this curiosity is an unwillingness ultimately to accept

---

83. Lewis, p.71.
84. *Place of the Lion*, p.53.
85. Ibid., p.54.

the mysteries of God as mysteries, and to act obediently in faith. This does not involve any unnecessary credulity. Williams was quite clear on that. He wrote as regards the Old Testament figure, Job : "The Lord demands that his people shall demand an explanation from him .... Humility has never consisted in not asking questions; it does not make men less themselves or less intelligent, but more intelligent and more themselves."[86] R.G. Collingwood has written that "knowledge grows by a healthy oscillation between doubt and certainty.... it is by facing and answering... doubts that you acquire knowledge...."[87] Abelard put this same fact of intellectual experience in this way : "By doubting we come to questioning, and by questioning we perceive the truth."[88] Williams has said of him : "'Intelligo ut credam,' Abelard almost said, and might have added 'dubito ut credam'.... the influence of Abelard lasted, and the Church was saved from the silence imposed by holy men upon those of other temperaments."[89] At times, one feels that Williams, in his zeal to avoid an unintelligent, and potentially dangerous, credulity, at all costs, was inclined to place too much value upon a "healthy" agnosticism, as in his description of Sir Bernard Travers in Shadows of Ecstasy.[90] By the time of Descent into Hell he was able to show the strength and the weakness of agnosticism. This is how he

---

86. He Came Down from Heaven, pp.31-32.
87. R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of History, p.95.
88. Quoted by Dom David Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought (London, 1962), p.125.
89. Descent of the Dove, pp.109-110.
90. Shadows of Ecstasy (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), pp.36-37).

contrasts the agnostic, Hugh Prescott, with the converted person, Pauline Anstruther : "There was, between the group to which his soul belonged and here, no difference except only that of love and joy...."[91]

In The Place of the Lion, a feature of Williams's approach to the problem of evil which causes some uneasiness is peculiarly well illustrated. This is an indifference towards the agony evil inflicts upon those subject to it. Williams does frequently give expression to the pain which is the ultimate end of devoting oneself to evil. But this is often described with an almost clinical detachment; as is the case with the fate which overtook Foster in this novel.

> Strangled and twisted, he was lifted and carried on the wind; he was flung into the air and carelessly dropped back on to the earth.... Immense pressure enclosed and crushed him; in a dreadful pain he ceased to be.[92]

Moreover, all the while Foster had been circling around Quentin Sabot who had previously taken refuge beside the archetypal lamb, Williams says that the "lamb took no notice of... [Foster] whatever."[93] In his later works, this apparent indifference is considerably modified. For example, both Lester Furnivall and Betty Wallingford in All Hallows' Eve repeatedly offer love and help to their girlfriend, Evelyn, even though the latter as consistently rejects all such proffers. One of the strengths of this novel is Williams's greater penetration into the plight

---

91. Descent into Hell, p.197.
92. Place of the Lion, pp.177-178.
93. Ibid., p.177.

of those who have not chosen to follow the God. In The Greater Trumps occurs one of the finest passages in Williams. Nancy Coningsby hears "the distracted voice of Joanna," Henry's aunt break "into a paroxysm of despair and desire."

> Witches at the stake, with the fire already about them, might have been shrieking so, with as little chance that the stricken hearers would know the names they adjured. But it was not of witches that Nancy thought... she heard a more human cry. She heard the wail that rang through the chasm, and it was a wail that went up from the depths of the world.... the sound of that universal distress terrified her young soul. On the edge of a descent an antique misery was poised, and from the descent, from the house, from the earth, misery beyond telling lamented and complained - to men who could not aid, to gods who made no signs, for it was the gods themselves that had been lost.[94]

The difference between the description of Foster's fate and this passage here is that, while the former was characterized by a concern with judgement, the latter is dominated by the idea of compassion. Joanna is swearing by, and calling upon, the gods of ancient Egypt. Here Williams has tried to analyse the heart of the misery of all that is not good, of all that is evil : what men most need, is that which they most reject. This is man in search of that which only his own blindness prevents him from finding. This is man as victim of himself. But it is also man as victim of something more than himself. Here man is shown as completely entangled in a force which he cannot comprehend. At the

---

94. Greater Trumps, pp.224-225.

conclusion of All Hallows' Eve. Williams again rises to a height such as this in his perception of how incomprehensible to, and yet utterly painful for, the majority of men and women evil often is. This is presented in his picture of the "sick and sorry creatures... lying or crouching"[95] on the floor of the Clerk's hall in Holborn. These are the people whom the Clerk had claimed to have cured, and whose diseases have returned upon them with the collapse of his power. They had only been borne up by the illusion of health. Yet, whatever faults may have been theirs, the emphasis at the close of the novel is upon their pitiable state as the dupes of evil, incarnate in the Clerk. Moreover, they are those for whom Betty Wellingford will expend herself in an effort to cure them.

There is another similar development to be detected in Williams's attitude to evil. Sometimes one feels there is almost an amoral element in his earlier novels. The fact that Henry Lee literally tried to murder Mr. Coningsby is never properly recognised in The Greater Trumps. In fact, Nancy Coningsby dismisses it as a matter for laughter. Henry says to her:

> "But you hated what I was doing, you wanted to save your father - of course you did! I'm not blaming you - but how can you help me now?"
>
> She broke unexpectedly into a laugh, the sound of which surprised some solemn part of her nature, but seemed to bring freedom at once into herself and into the dark room, so that she felt relieved of her lingering fear. "O, Henry

---

95. All Hallows' Eve, p.230.

darling," she said, "must those dancers of yours [that is, the dancing images of which the Tarot cards were copies] concentrate on my father?... Henry sweetest, how serious you are about it all!"

"You can laugh," he said uncertainly, not as a question nor yet in anger, but as if he were feeling after some strange fact.[96]

One is reminded inevitably of Julian of Norwich at this point :

To the malice and cunning with which the reprobate work against the will of God he opposed his might and right. I saw our Lord scorn such malice, and expose the emptiness of the Fiend's powerlessness; and it is his will that we should do the same. When I saw this I laughed so heartily that it made those around me laugh too, and their laughter did me good. I thought I would have liked all my fellow Christians to have seen what I saw, that they might laugh with me.... I understood that we may laugh when we would comfort ourselves and rejoice in God that the devil has been overcome.[97]

I have omitted one sentence here : "But I did not see Christ laugh." By the time of All Hallows' Eve Williams seems to have begun to treat evil with something more of the seriousness Christ exhibited. That novel recognises everyone's duty to help his fellows to break from sin and self, and to live instead, in the interdependence of love. The cost of love and the agony of evil are both emphasised. In such a setting, it would have been inconsistent to evade the seriousness of

---

96. Greater Trumps, p.149.

97. Wolters, Revelations, p.84.

evil. Thus, though Simon the Clerk sees his attempt to send Betty Wallingford's spirit into the world of spirit as "only a compulsory dissolution of bonds between soul and body,"[98] it is later unequivocally identified as murder.[99] Lady Wallingford, who is depicted as "the vessel of such human passion as remained"[100] to the Clerk, interrupts his magical "intoning" with the words : "'Kill! Kill!'"[101]

Finally, I should like to stress one point. Though Williams probably found support for his rejection of the reality of the devil in the metaphysical monism of Dionysius, in doing so he also rejected the dominant tradition of the Middle Ages. Much, in fact, of Williams's treatment of evil may be seen as a reaction against the "Arrival of the Devil"[102] at the beginning of the medieval period. This is, of course, a part of his whole monistic outlook. He attributed the "development of the idea of the Devil" to "the whole great transmutation of general supernatural power into the two schools of divine and anti-divine power."[103] It is doubtful if he ever satisfactorily reconciled the apparent dualism of life with his belief in an ultimately monistic universe.

---

98. All Hallows' Eve, p.136.
99. See All Hallows' Eve, pp.149, 213.
100. Ibid., p.153.
101. Ibid., p.149.
102. Witchcraft (London: Faber and Faber, 1941), p.36.
103. Ibid., p.60.

IV The Extent of Williams's "Mediovalism"

In his view of evil, Williams undoubtedly came very close to adopting an unorthodox position. This is not unusual in a writer deeply concerned with mystical experience. One only has to remember the difficulties Dionysius the Areopagite and Julian of Norwich encountered when they approached the problem of evil, to realise how much to be expected are the divagations of Williams.[1] The shift in emphasis, however, which is found in his attitude towards mysticism in general is more far-reaching, though perhaps not so immediately striking. In my first two chapters I tried to show wherein Williams modified the orthodox position, particularly with regard to asceticism, and the primacy accorded to the Contemplative life where mysticism was concerned. Williams seems to have based his departures from the central Roman tradition upon the authority of the early Church. Reviewing The High Church Tradition by G.W.O. Addleshaw, Williams quotes the following passage :

> "The superficial writer on religious matters would not gain a hearing in the seventeenth century, unless his superficialities had been purged away by a knowledge of the Fathers. Unless he had read his Chrysostom... his opinions would have been ruled out of court."

Williams's comment is : "These are healthy sentences for present-day

---

1. See Holt, Introduction to Dionysius, pp.20-23; and Walters, Introduction to Revelations, pp.36-38.

writers to consider; those learned clergymen are no longer figures of fun."[2] If a knowledge of the early Church writers was important to seventeenth century Anglicans, it should be no less so to those of the twentieth century. It should always be remembered that Williams was an Anglican. Contrasting Evelyn Underhill with himself, he wrote that the Church of England "had not been to her... 'the Vision of the Principle,' so that, whatever great doctors and august traditions others may acknowledge beyond it, it is still... control and direction, origin, nourishment, and glory."[3] From my understanding of Williams, I take it that for him the roots of Anglicanism were to be found in the Fathers, rather than in the Scholastics, upon whom the Roman Church would appear to lay equal stress. Thus Williams in his attack on asceticism in The Descent of the Dove refers to "two ancient canons, said to date from the second or third century."[4] A similar emphasis is probably to be detected in his defence of the possibility of mystical experience in the Active life. Dom Francois Vandenbroucke says of Dante :

> Possibly he was not a mystic in the sense that is often given to the word - an exceptional being, who experiences God, so to speak, by virtue of a natural predisposition. Dante belongs to a different tradition, that of those great Christian spiritual writers who were at the same time men of action, of whom the leader was St. Paul.[5]

---

2. Williams, Image of the City, pp.121-122.
3. Introduction to The Letters of Evelyn Underhill, p.25.
4. Descent of the Dove, p.55.
5. The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, p.369.

Roman orthodoxy has some hesitation in accepting St. Paul as a mystic. However, in 1963 two Penguin paperbacks appeared,[6] neither of which found any difficulty in accepting Paul as a mystic. Williams, himself, refuses to comment on Dante's personal experience of mystical enlightenment : "We do not know if he was a 'mystic,' nor is it our business; and the word, having been mentioned, may now be dismissed."[7] Nevertheless, if the argument I have outlined in the first two chapters is accepted, then the Way of the Affirmation of Images which Williams claimed to discover in Dante's works has many of the characteristics of mysticism. As this is the Way Williams followed in his own life, and the Way to the advocacy of which he devoted much of his energy, then I feel it would not be going too far to suggest that Williams favoured that "different tradition" of which "the leader was St. Paul."

Not only was it in his deviations from the Roman tradition in mysticism that Williams looked to the authority of the early centuries of the Church; but he also found there the core of his ideas upon that subject. So far I have illustrated his basic views on mysticism by referring to writers such as Dionysius the Areopagite and the Lady Julian; but, in The Descent of the Dove, Williams's basic tenets are illustrated from the first four centuries of Christianity. In a footnote to page ninety-two of The Figure of Beatrice, Williams refers to God in Patristic Theology by G.L. Prestige for "the clearest exposition"

---

6. F.C. Happold, Mysticism; Sidney Spencer, Mysticism in World Religion.
7. Figure of Beatrice, p.11.

he knew of "co-inherence" as a "definition of the Divine Life." In The Descent of the Dove, the Patristic basis of Williams's views on "co-inherence" is made explicit. There he wrote that "the Godhead itself was in co-inherence."[8] His authority is Origen; the latter

> strongly maintained... the voluntary Subordination of the Son; he contemplated in Deity Itself the joy of obedience .... The Son is co-equal with the Father... yet the Son is obedient to the Father.... he co-inheres obediently and filially in the Father, as the Father authoritatively and paternally co-inheres in him. And the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together -- and co-equal.[9]

Co-inherence is the fundamental law of the universe because it is the nature of the Godhead, the Three Persons of which co-inhere in one another. At the practical level, co-inherence is known as substitution and exchange. This doctrine was laid down by Clement of Alexandria: "For the sake of each of us he [the Lord] laid down his life -- worth no less than the universe. He demands of us in return our lives for the sake of each other."[10] Referring to a statement made by a Carthaginian slave-girl, called Felicitas, who was martyred in A.D. 202, Williams wrote: "Another voice... had laid down more simply, in Carthage, the great fundament: 'Another will be in me who will suffer for me as I shall suffer for him.' The two African cities proclaimed the universal web of exchange."[11] Finally, from the Athanasian Creed (a slightly

---

8. The Descent of the Dove, p.52.
9. Ibid., pp.39-40.
10. Ibid., pp.36-37.
11. Ibid., p.37.

later document, but one which sums up the early teaching of the Church) Williams derived the authority for his most characteristic idea. The Creed

> produces a phrase which is the very maxim of the Affirmative Way : "Not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh but by taking of the manhood into God".... it is the actual manhood which is to be carried on, and not the height which is to be brought down. All images are, in their degree, to be carried on; mind is never to put off matter; all experience is to be gathered in.[12]

It is inevitable that one will question the necessity to locate the doctrinal source of Williams's views; but it has to be done, and that for two reasons. One is that Williams laid great stress upon the traditions of the Church as a check upon the "vagaries" of individual genius. He says of Origen that, "like all intelligent readers then as now, [he] realized that he needed a check upon his own brain and he found it, where all Christians have found it, in the universal decisions of the Church."[13] Moreover, Williams also brings forward the following quotation : "'He ceases,' wrote Clement, 'to be a man of God and faithful to the Lord who sets on one side the tradition of the Church.'"[14] If Williams diverges from tradition in the matter of mysticism as much as I have suggested, then, holding the views he did on authority, it is no wonder that he was anxious to substantiate his

---

12. Ibid., p.59.
13. Ibid., p.36.
14. Ibid., p.39.

position. The other reason why it is important to be clear to what extent Williams relied upon ecclesiastical authority is to be able to determine to what extent his views were the result of other formative experiences in his life.

Of these there are two : his experience of "romantic love," and his experience of poetry. Here Williams seems to be following Dante, and indeed, this is probably one principal reason for his love of that poet. Beatrice was Dante's image of romantic love; Virgil, his image of poetry.

For Williams, romantic love began in 1907, from which date may be reckoned his acquaintance with Florence Conway, his future wife. Mrs. Hadfield says, "he was thus plunged into his first conscious great experience." She continues : "what he made of it in thought and poetry is in his first published book, a series of eighty-four sonnets called The Silver Stair."[15] This came out in 1912. Already in that volume, the beloved is seen as the "Regent... of God."[16] Moreover, "all lives of lovers are His song of love."[17] The natural loves of men and women are all categories of one identity, the archnatural love of God. Finally, in a sequence of six sonnets entitled "The Passion of Love,"[18] the life, death and resurrection of Love, or Jesus, is recounted. Will-

---

15. Alice M. Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams (London,1959), p.31.
16. "That the Love of a Woman is the Vice-Gerent of God," The Silver Stair (London: Herbert and Daniel, [1912]), Book I, Sonnet XVII, p.23.
17. "An Ascription," The Silver Stair, Book III, Sonnet LXVII, p.75.
18. "The Passion of Love," The Silver Stair, Book III, Sonnets LXXIII-LXXVII, pp.81-86.

iams already appears to have grasped those basic ideas on love which he was to elaborate throughout the rest of his career. Here one finds suggested the idea that a man's love of a woman may lead him gradually to a love of God; but that without the latter, the former would remain incomplete.

The year after the publication of The Silver Stair appeared a book which it is known on the authority of Anne Ridler, made a deep impression upon Williams. This was A.E. Waite's The Secret Doctrine in Israel. Waite was well-known in the first quarter of this century for his writings on mystical lore. It is probable that this study of Jewish mysticism, as it is contained in the Zohar (thirteenth century), exercised a considerable influence upon the further development of Williams's views on love and marriage. Waite says that "marriage for the mystic Jew had become a sacrament...";[19] and calls the system which had been evolved, "the religion of earthly espousals."[20] These phrases bear a curious resemblance to Williams's statement that marriage may be "a Way of the Soul"[21]; and to his use of the term, "the theology of romantic love."[22] Thus Jewish mysticism was able to provide a system which could integrate Williams's personal experience of sexual love with his religious aspirations. As C.S. Lewis has shown in The Allegory of Love, "the 'sexology' of the medieval church"[23] was

19. Arthur E. Waite, The Secret Doctrine in Israel: A Study of the Zohar and its Connections (London, 1913), p.267.

19. Arthur E. Waite, The Secret Doctrine in Israel: A Study of the Zohar and its Connections (London, 1913), p.267.

20. Waite, Secret Doctrine in Israel, p.249.

21. Religion and Love, p.4.

22. Ibid., p.3.

23. Lewis, Allegory, p.13.

not such as to help anyone like Williams to achieve a reconciliation. Lewis writes that "according to the medieval view passionate love itself was wicked, and did not cease to be wicked if the object of it were your wife."[24] Williams was well aware of what the medieval Scholastics thought of the relations between men and women. In The Descent of the Dove, he gives the following footnote : "St. Thomas (Part I, Q. 92, Art. 1) says that woman was created as a helper to man 'in the work of generation,' for in all other works man 'can be more efficiently helped by another man'."[25] For Williams, woman was also capable of being of great spiritual benefit to man. That aspect of the medieval outlook with which Williams did sympathise was amour courtois. Though it is significant that he emphasises that, in the works of Chrétien de Troyes, the treatment of love is "not only real and recognizable but even respectable." He continues that "the Erec depends upon a married relationship.... And in Cligès marriage is twice stressed : the first time, by a general statement; the second, by the details of the story."[26] R.S. Loomis in The Development of Arthurian Romance has recently drawn attention to the position of honour accorded to marriage in Chretien's romances of Erec, Cligès and Ivain.[27]

After The Silver Stair, Williams published three other volumes of

---

24. Lewis, p.14.
25. Descent of the Dove, p.123, N[1].
26. The Figure of Arthur in Arthurian Torso (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p.49. Hereafter cited as Williams, Arthurian Torso.
27. London, 1963, pp.44 ff.

poetry, which are largely concerned with love in some aspect or other. These are Poems of Conformity (1917), Divorce (1920), and Windows of Night (1924). By the time of Windows of Night, Williams's view of love was, in its main outlines, fully developed. However, with the publication of Three Plays in 1931, a new emphasis appears. Mrs. Hadfield says that when Williams was engaged on one of those plays, The Chaste Wanton, "he was reading Dante."[28] In that play, one of the characters, Vincenzo, acts as a catalyst in love affairs. This is the poet, unsuccessful in love himself and hence a virgin, who yet stimulates in others the capacity to love. On the whole, this is tangential to Williams's main line of thought on love, and I shall discuss its implications for his later work when I come in the following chapter to consider the character of Taliessin. For the moment, the point which concerns me is this, that though one tends to associate the name of Dante with Williams's views on love because of the connection with that poet which appears in books such as The Figure of Beatrice, nevertheless, this is not necessarily a true attribution of influences. It is more likely that Williams's attitude to love is based upon the nature of his own experience, reinforced by his knowledge of Jewish mysticism. But that between 1924 and the writing of his Taliessin cycle, he progressively sought for, and found, writers who would confirm his Christian viewpoint. The Middle Ages happened to provide many such writers. Dante was one of these.

---

28. Hadfield, Introduction to Charles Williams, p.76.

In 1925 the first draft of Shadows of Ecstasy was finished, under the title of The Black Bastard. The novel was not finally published till 1933. At the end of the novel, a reference is made to Shakespeare as "the greatest of the poets."[29] By 1938, however, Williams says of : "Quardeci ben : ben sem, ben sem, Beatrice," that it "has been called almost the greatest line in Dante and therefore in all poetry."[30] The implication is that Dante is, in fact, "the greatest of the poets." Continuing in this vein, in 1942, Williams wrote that "it has been said of Shakespeare that he wrote the whole supernatural life in terms of the natural, and it is true that he is the great protagonist of natural life without apparent need - humanly speaking - of the supernatural." He did add : "He is... as necessary to check the excesses of the disciples of Dante as Dante is to check the excesses of his disciples. Either without the other is incomplete...."[31] But the emotional balance of Williams's work is in favour of Dante. This is especially in evidence when one considers which aspect of Shakespeare, Williams chose to emphasise. This was the late romantic comedies.[32] These are the plays which most nearly approach (in Williams's view) to a metaphysical resolution of the complexities of life, and restore that unified view consistent with the apprehension of All co-inhering in God.

---

29. Shadows of Ecstasy, p.224.
30. He Came Down from Heaven, p.75.
31. Forgiveness of Sins, pp.175-176.
32. See Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p.104.

Of these plays, themselves, Cymbeline seems to be Williams's favourite, because of the character of Imogen whom he calls the "noblest of Shakespeare's women."[33] As early as 1920 Williams had shown his preference for tragedies, when he said of the Christmas season that it was :

Then while to Shakespeare,
Brooding alone,
In a dark pageant,
Lear was shown,
While his just loathing
Hung over men,
Lo, from the darkness
Came Imogen.[34]

The resolution of Cymbeline is symbolical of what happens to the tragedy of a man's existence when he allows pardon or forgiveness to enter into his life; thereby associating himself with the metaphysical reality of the universe which is manifested in terms of substitution and exchange. Williams, of course, believes that forgiveness is one of the most important forms which the principle of exchange takes.[35] Considering that this was Williams's approach to Shakespeare, it is no surprise that the latter yielded place to Dante in his estimation. However, it is of great importance to note that Williams's medievalism in this instance was not the source of his ideas, but a corroboration of them by a writer congenial to Williams's Christian viewpoint. The first reference I have come across to Dante's name in Williams's creative writing is in

---

33. Forgiveness of Sins, p.114.
34. "Christmas," Divorce (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), p.96.
35. See Williams, Image of the City, p.109. "... perhaps the deepest understanding of exchange, the exchange of pardon."

The Greater Trumps.[36] He was destined to be the presiding genius of the Taliessin cycle.

Another example of a similar development in Williams's ideas is to be found in connection with Blake. He is mentioned in Windows of Night (1923).[37] In He Came Down from Heaven, Blake is quoted to illustrate Williams's attitude to forgiveness.[38] He is accorded a similar function in The Forgiveness of Sins which appeared four years later. There the following remark was made : "It is worth remembering Blake. But beyond Blake lies the Lady Julian of Norwich. Few, if any, of the English have written so greatly of pardon as she."[39] Williams's first reference to the Lady Julian in his creative writing occurs in War in Heaven where the Archdeacon of Fardles is discovered reading her Revelations shortly before his final ordeal.[40] In The Greater Trumps, Sybil Coningsby, while attempting to soothe her niece, Nancy, echoes the Lady Julian : "'Tell me then - there, darling, quietly; all is well, as is most well - ...'"[41] At a later stage it is Nancy's turn to quote the Lady Julian : "'All is well; all is

---

36. Greater Trumps, pp.124-125.

37. "Sub specie Aeternitatis," Windows of Night (London: Oxford University Press, [1924]), p.98. "Authentic accents of eternity, / Hears... in Milton's, Blake's, or Shakespeare's line." Wordsworth is also referred to in this poem.

38. He Came Down from Heaven, p.39.

39. Forgiveness of Sins, p.183.

40. War in Heaven, p.239.

41. Greater Trumps, p.142. Italics mine. Cf. Forgiveness of Sins, p.175.

most well,' she murmured.... "[42] Once again, the medieval authority is introduced relatively late into Williams's thought.

Milton, also mentioned in Windows of Night,[43] is not so pertinent to this discussion as the other major English poets whom Williams admired. His relevance is rather to Williams's general verse technique which is no part of this study. Therefore, I shall leave him aside, and consider Williams's debt to Wordsworth. He is perhaps the most interesting of the poets under consideration. In The Arthurian Torso, C.S. Lewis writes that "the Druids, as I learn from one of Williams's own notes, represent 'a kind of ancient earthly poetry - say, like Wordsworth!'"[44] Taliessin "was Druid-sprung" (TTL. 4), but "For all the codes his young tongue bore" :

> The weight of poetry could not then sink
> into the full depth of the weight of glory (SS. 15)

Presumably, "the depth of the weight of glory"was denied to Wordsworth. Bearing in mind what I have said about Williams's admiration for the power of resolution exhibited in Shakespeare's last plays, then one can begin to understand his objection to Wordsworth in the light of a criticism such as the following : "For it was humanity's afflicted will struggling in vain of which his poetry was most intensely aware."[45] Here there is no emphasis upon any resolution in the ultimate reality

---

42. Ibid., p.162.
43. See above, N[37].
44. Williams and the Arthuriad in Arthurian Torso, p.103. Hereafter cited as Lewis, Arthurian Torso.
45. The English Poetic Mind (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), p.170.

of the One.

Nevertheless, Williams was able to write in The Figure of Beatrice that, "on the whole, the nearest thing to... [Dante's record of the Way of the Affirmation of Images] which we have in English literature is in the Prelude of Wordsworth, and in his other lesser poems."[46] If, as I have been trying to show, one of the major formative influences upon Williams was English poetry, and that only at a later stage was this reinforced by his medieval studies; then it is possible that the true origin of Williams's doctrine of the Way of the Affirmation of Images was Wordsworth rather than Dante. In which case, Williams's later acquaintance with Dante would be responsible mainly for the manner in which he formulated ideas which he had already conceived.

In the first two chapters of this study I tried to emphasise the fact that, for Williams, although his Way of the Affirmation of Images was a Way of active participation in ordinary life, it also involved a degree of mystical insight. Williams believed that a poet's intuition of ultimate reality was closely related to the idea of mystical insight. This may be seen in his discussion of Wordsworth's ideas on poetry. Of the latter, Williams wrote :

> In many places... [the Prelude] bears its own testimony to the unique value of poetry. William [Wordsworth] had a dream once in which he saw only one thing to rival it, only one other human achievement which was of even approximate value; that one thing was Euclid's Elements of Geometry....

---

46. Figure of Beatrice, p.11.

> but even in the dream poetry was thought to be worth more than Euclid. Euclid expressed 'reason undisturbed by space or time', but poetry expressed passion, which itself 'is highest reason in a soul sublime.'[47]

One might have thought on the basis of this that Williams would have had a healthy regard for the medieval Scholastics. However, this was not so. In The Descent of the Dove he wrote : "'Reason,' as Chesterton said, 'is always a kind of brute force....'" Williams added : "There is, certainly, a way by which Reason can avoid that brutality; it is not a way that St. Thomas took...."[48] But Euclid, on the other hand, is said to have taken it. Here, despite Williams's increasing appreciation of medieval thinkers, he remains faithful to the image of rationalism bequeathed to him by Wordsworth. In this same section, Williams then proceeds to demonstrate the superiority of the poet Dante over the medieval philosophers. Fundamentally, therefore, Williams is in agreement with Wordsworth. In order to define the peculiar quality of poetry, Williams frequently uses certain phrases from Wordsworth. This quality is "Reason in her most exalted mood" or "the height of feeling intellect."[49] This power in poetry produces "sublimity [which] is a state in which passion is reason; in which we see into the life of things."[50] Moreover, "the greatest poetry [is] that of the eternal

---

47. Reason and Beauty, p.18.
48. Descent of the Dove, p.122.
49. Figure of Beatrice, pp. 12, 13. See Wordsworth, The Prelude, Book xiv, lines 192, 226, resp.
50. Reason and Beauty, p.20.

present, of 'the life of things'."[51] Poetry is superior to reason because of its power to seize upon metaphysical truth. The emphasis found in Wordsworth upon the importance of reason, and of that higher metaphysical power which he called poetry, is closely paralleled in the thought of St. Augustine. Paraphrasing the latter's philosophy, Gordon Leff writes :

> From... [a] primary awareness of our own existence through thought, we can advance to awareness of certain ideas in our soul. Those, unlike the fleeting objects of the real world, remain constant and universal : number, colour, goodness, being, are all concepts that we possess and which are quite independent of external circumstances. They enable us to formulate certain laws such that, say, 2 + 2 = 4, without needing to deal with actual numbers. Such truths are common to all men; they are signs of a higher Truth which we call God.[52]

The problem for Williams is that he firmly believed that there was "a higher Truth," and that this was "God"; but it is not always clear whether spiritual insight and poetical insight are separate human capacities or one and the same thing. This ambiguity is most obviously present in Williams's treatment of any characters, whether in his fiction or his poetry, who happen to be poets.

Such a character is Peter Stanhope in Descent into Hell. Of him, Pauline Anstruther's grandmother says that he

---

51. Ibid., p.21.
52. Leff, Medieval Thought, pp.39-40.

"... must have been frightened many times."

"O - poetry!" Pauline exclaimed bitterly. "That's different; you know it is grandmother."

"In seeing?" Margaret asked. "And as for being, you must find out for yourself."[53]

This is quite straightforward. The passage recognises the power of the poet, that is, in "seeing"; while emphasising the fact that the poet has to come to terms with existence like anyone else. There are a couple of other references as regards poetry which are important. When Pauline Anstruther is at last able to make her offer to carry her ancestor's burden of fear, Williams writes of her joy : "The glory of poetry could not outshine the clear glory of the certain fact, and not any poetry could hold as many meanings as the fact."[54] To enter into the world of the spirit through personal experience is incomparably superior to any mediated insight such as poetry might afford. Lastly, towards the end of the novel, Pauline says to Stanhope : "'I suppose poets are superfluous in Salem.'"[55] She means that in the New Jerusalem there will be no distinctions according to talent or gift. People will not be remembered as having been specially endowed individuals, such as poets, but only as being redeemed souls. Despite all these precautions which Williams has taken, I am still convinced that he fails in his characterisation of Stanhope. To begin with, there are two "saints" in the novel, Stanhope and Margaret Anstruther; but of the

---

53. Descent into Hell, p.150.
54. Ibid., p.171.
55. Ibid., p.212.

two, Stanhope plays the dominant role. Emotionally, the novel is already biased towards the poet-saint. Moreover, Stanhope is the idol of the whole community of Battle Hill, its "most famous inhabitant."[56] In particular, he is the idol of Pauline Anstruther. For example, this is how Williams describes her experience as she watches Stanhope conclude the performance of his latest play with a few remarks addressed to the audience.

> She was standing aside, and she heard the voice and knew it; from the edge of eternity the poets were speaking to the world, and two modes of experience were mingled in that sole utterance. She knew the voice, and heard it; all else was still. Peter Stanhope, as he had promised, was saying a few words at the close of the play.[57]

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this idolisation of the poet as seer. What disturbs is the picture that is presented of Stanhope as a being. At one point, he is described quoting from the Tempest : "His voice became incantation; his hand stretched upward in the air, as if he invoked the motion of the influences, and the hand was magical to her sight."[58] This is a serious description. There is no trace of humour in it. At this point Stanhope is being associated with the magician, Prospero. In other words, Williams is not characterising Stanhope by means of his mannerisms; but he is identifying an almost

---

56. Ibid., p.9.
57. Ibid., p.186.
58. Ibid., p.178.

divine power in Stanhope by means of the presence of certain mannerisms. Admittedly, it is through the eyes of Pauline Anstruther that the incident is presented to the reader. Nevertheless, at no stage is this viewpoint placed in a wider perspective so as to allow the reader to come to an independent judgement. This attribution of semi-divinity to Stanhope is increased by the fact that he appears to be a professional writer, and for the duration of the novel has no other function than to preside benignly over his play, over his creation. At the end of the chapter entitled "Dress Rehearsal" comes the sentence : "Remained only the performance of the play."[59] The implication is gradually enforced upon the reader that, in a sense, the whole chain of events recounted in the novel as happening that summer in Battle Hill may be understood as being drawn into and made a part of Stanhope's play. Previously, it had been said that "the Kingdom of God which fulfilled itself in the remote recesses of his specious verse fulfilled itself also in... [Mrs. Parry's] effective supremacy [as producer]."[60] But it has also been suggested just a little earlier than this,[61] that Mrs. Parry's freedom to organise is partly due to the willing subordination of Stanhope to her. The conclusion which must be drawn from all this is that Stanhope is "the god-image in the novel."[62] Descent into Hell is not

---

59. Ibid., p.151.
60. Ibid., pp. 145-146.
61. Ibid., p.145.
62. Sister M. La Lande, S.S.N.D., "Williams' Pattern of Time in Descent into Hell," Renascence, XV (1963), 92.

"a pastoral"[63] as Stanhope's was supposed to be. There is too much realism in the histories of the suicide, of Wentworth, and of Adela Hunt, for it to be a "romantic comedy" of the Shakespearian kind. In such a context, Stanhope's semi-divinity constitutes an artistic blemish.

My criticism of the character of Taliessin is similar to that I have outlined in the case of Peter Stanhope. After Taliessin has returned from Byzantium, he is representative of the Christian as opposed to the pagan poet. This aspect in Stanhope, though probably present, was not stressed by Williams. Taliessin is finally able to bear "the full depth of the weight of glory" (SS. 15). Still, when it comes to the divisions in the Company, though Taliessin is allocated to the third group, yet he is not on a par with the saints proper. It is said of him :

> More rarely, at a moment, the king's poet saw
> in the large vision of verse, at once everywhere
> the law willed and fulfilled and walking in Camelot;
> as from a high deck among tossing seas
> beyond Broceliande he had seen afar
> a deep, strange island of granite growth,
> thrice charged with massive light in change... (SS. 39)

Occasionally, Taliessin has a vision of "the land of the Trinity" (SS.39). As with Stanhope, it is less what is said about Taliessin, as what is implied by his function in the cycle, that causes uneasiness. In the poem, The Star of Percivale, there is a stanza in which the danger of

---

63. See Descent into Hell, p.11.

deifying Taliessin is clearly expressed. He has been singing, and his song has opened the eyes of "a serving-maid" to perceive spiritual truth :

> Languid, the soul of a maid, at service in the hall,
> heard, rose, ran fleetly to fall at his feet.
>
> Soft there, quiescent in adoration, it sang :
> "Lord, art thou he that cometh? take me for thine."
> The music rang; the king's poet leaned to say :
> "See thou do it not; I too am a man" (TTL. 46)

Unfortunately, in certain other poems, Williams allows considerable ambiguity to enter as to how far, in fact, Taliessin is just "a man." In The Queen's Servant, Taliessin uses of himself the royal plural; and he dismisses the servant who is to join the entourage of the queen, with the injunction : "Be as Ourself in Logres" (SS. 46). That is, the freed slave is to represent Taliessin at court. The spiritual meaning is that the person freed from the bondage of sin or self is to represent all that Taliessin stands for, in that sphere of activity in the world in which he or she has been placed. Here Taliessin is very much an image of Christ. Moreover, the redemptive work of Christ is associated with Taliessin's purchase of the slave-girl. She says that she was "with a clear sum purchased from the world" by him. Therefore, she says to Taliessin, "Though I pay the ransom now, it is but with your gold" (SS. 42). This is, in effect, the Christian position that one has no merit in oneself, save for the righteousness imputed to one through faith in Christ. To make Taliessin into an image of Christ is to deny the former any possibility of development as a human character. Thus

Taliessin, despite his assertion that he is just "a man," becomes a semi-divine figure. Within the cycle he cannot function as a character, only as a type of Christ. At present I am not concerned with the artistic propriety of this, as I was in the case of Stanhope. What is of moment here is to what extent is this semi-divinisation of Taliessin a result of his being a poet.

According to a note of Williams's, "Taliessin is the poetic imagination in this world."[64] Yet, in the cycle, he is given the most prominent spiritual role, so far as the interpretation of truth, and the spiritual directorship of the other characters, is concerned. Taliessin, as poet, presumably is in possession of what Wordsworth termed the "feeling intellect"; as spiritual director, one would expect him to know St. Augustine's "higher Truth which we call God." But, it would appear to be suggested at times in the cycle that the "higher Truth" can be apprehended by virtue of the faculty of the "feeling intellect." "In the third heaven are the living unriven truths" (SS. 14). This is the true home of "the feeling intellect" which is also "the spiritual intellect" (SS. 14). The "third heaven" is the highest sphere of divine truth which mortal men can penetrate. In The Son of Lancelot reference is made to the fact that "the third sphere" of heaven was seen "once by a northern poet beyond Snowdon" by virtue of "the mens sensitive, / the feeling intellect" (TT. 55-56). In other words, Wordsworth, by virtue

---

64. Williams, Image of the City, p.178.

of his poetical insight, was able to see "the living unriven truths." Part of what Wordsworth saw was his vision of "geometric truth" and "poetry," symbolised by a stone and shell.[65] Taliessin says :

> My lords and fathers the Druids between the hazels
> touched poems in chords; they made tell
> of everywhere a double dance of a stone and a shell,
> and the glittering sterile smile of the sea that pursues (TTL.70)

This passage is paraphrased from the Prelude. The poem continues :

> Gareth answered : "I heard it read from a book
> by a Northern poet..." (TTL. 71)

The implication here connects with that note, to which I referred earlier,[66] in which the Druids were said to represent the type of poetry written by Wordsworth. Williams now develops the symbolism of stone and shell along a path peculiarly his own :

> ... "Today
> the stone was fitted to the shell," the king's poet said;
> "when my lord Sir Lancelot's son sat in the perilous cell...
> (TTL. 71)

The union of stone and shell, of "measurement" and "sound" (TTL. 71), and presumably, of geometry and poetry, constitutes man's realisation of a spiritual state of being, for this is what happened when Galahad, who represents spiritual achievement, came to Camelot. There is room for ambiguity in carrying on a discussion of spiritual matters in quasi-aesthetic terms.

---

65. See Wordsworth, The Prelude, Book v, lines 90-140, esp. line 65.
66. See above, p.276.

These same symbols are applied to the spiritual experiences of certain other characters. Very often God is only perceived after one has been disciplined. So, in the case of a girl who asks Taliessin : "is the shell thus... hidden in the stone?" (TTL. 73). Is spiritual achievement for her in some way bound up with the chastisement she has received while a slave in Logres? A little later it is said of Blanchefleur who has taken the veil, that "her hands and head were the shell bursting from the stone / after it has bred in the stone" (TTL. 74). Her Godliness reaches its full fruition on account of the spiritual discipline to which she subjects herself. These instances of Galahad, the slave, and Blanchefleur, are all concerned with moral and spiritual welfare. So too are those instances where Taliessin exercises his influence upon the members of his household. As one poet, Wordsworth, by virtue of his poetical insight, handed on to Gareth certain symbols delineating fundamental truths; so another poet, this time the Christian Taliessin, by virtue of poetical insight allied to that knowledge of God which he received in Byzantium, presents to men and women a picture of spiritual reality and helps them to achieve their place in it. What Williams does not sufficiently stress is the fact that Taliessin's being a poet, while it may have facilitated his own spiritual growth, can have no necessary connection with his spiritual function.

This particular ambiguity which mars both Descent into Hell and Williams's Taliessin cycle is avoided in his last novel, All Hallows' Eve. There it is not a poet but a painter called Jonathan Drayton who represents artistic insight. The latter is convinced that one of his

paintings, that of a city flooded with light, "could be valid, could hold an experience related to the actuality of the world, and in itself valuable to mind and heart."[67] This opinion is justified by the fact that, as Richard Furnivall's sense of the spiritual reality of life is awakened, he finds in Jonathan's painting confirmation of his new outlook. "He stared in front of him, and realised slowly that he was looking deeply into the light."[68] It is while Richard is still under the spell of this picture that his conversion is seen finally to be achieved. "He was suddenly certain of Lester - not for himself, but in herself; she lived newly in the light. She lived - that was all; and so, by God's mercy, he."[69] There is no doubt as to the artist's function as seer. Yet, there is no confusion of this with his nature as a spiritual being. Twice, towards the end of the novel, Richard Furnivall is compared favourably with Jonathan so far as the experience of spirituality is concerned. After Lester and Evelyn, inhabiting the dwarf figure magically contrived by Simon the Clerk, have visited Jonathan's flat, Williams writes :

> Jonathan's horrid nightmares, oppressive as they were to him, were less distressing than the pain of a mother listening to her child choking with bronchitis in the night. Richard's endurance now, like hers, was of present and direct facts.[70]

---

67. All Hallows' Eve, p.57.
68. Ibid., p.132.
69. Ibid., p.134.
70. Ibid., p.210.

The full horror of the "breach in nature"[71] which they have witnessed is not so apparent to Jonathan, with all his imaginative powers, as it is to Richard who, through his love of Lester, feels directly involved. Later, when Simon the Clerk is at last dead, Betty turns to look at Jonathan, her fiancé.

> He looked back at her, he still young and already a master in a certain knowledge of that City. Yet it was not he - it was Richard over whom the Acts of the City more closely hovered, and he whose face, like Lester's once in Betty's own room, was touched with the sombre majesty of penitence and grief and a young death.[72]

Despite Jonathan's acknowledged place in the world of the spirit, he is here seen as outshone by the new spiritual life in Richard Furnivall. Moreover, trouble is taken throughout the novel to depict Jonathan as a real character. He is seen struggling inwardly, for example, with his pride as an artist over whether or not it would be wise to destroy his picture of Simon the Clerk.[73] Finally, in this novel, the role of "saint" is not given to Jonathan. This part is shared between the two girls, Lester and Betty. It is they who are the twin centre of spiritual activity.

Thus All Hallows' Eve presents Williams's final artistic resolution of the problem posed by his concurrence in Wordsworth's exalted view of poetry. Here, at last, Williams has been able to reconcile, what may

---

71. Loc. cit.
72. Ibid., p.235.
73. Ibid., p.49.

be termed, the "mysticism" of poetry with the mysticism of spirituality. That Williams found such difficulty in distinguishing between man as poet, and man as spiritual adept, does suggest that at least some of his own spiritual perception derived from his appreciation of poetry. This is not to be wondered at. F.C. Happold says of "pure contemplation"[74] that

> it is essentially a creative activity, similar to the highest activity of poet, painter, and musician. All great creative artists, whether their medium be words or paint or sound, must be in a real sense illuminated, and in some is clearly seen that remaking of consciousness which is found in the religious contemplative.[75]

Williams, in all probability, originally based his mysticism upon a fusion of his Anglican background with his sensitivity as a reader and writer of poetry. To this would be added only subsequently the influence of such mystics as Dionysius and the Lady Julian.

But, for Williams, poetry is more than just one of the "ways of telling ourselves the smallest notion that we've known for an instant before it utterly disappears in the unrepeatable process of"[76] "the immortal dance"[77] of the universe. He says that poetry also "possesses a reality which continually persuades us to repose upon it even in practical things of every day."[78] Thus, poetry returns in the end to the

---

74. Happold, p.84.
75. Happold, p.69.
76. Greater Trumps, p.95.
77. Ibid., p.96.
78. Reason and Beauty, p.vi.

problems men and women face as they attempt to cope with daily life, and offers guidance in how to deal with them. In a sense, this too is Williams's chief concern. The form of guidance which he offers may be unusual, but it is with the moral and spiritual difficulties of the contemporary situation that he is primarily preoccupied. It is to this end that his whole doctrine of the Way of the Affirmation of Images is geared. Because of this primary interest in the contemporary world, it is not so surprising that Williams should nowhere evince that pleasure which derives from a keen sense of the whole texture of a past age. As in his attitude to poetry it is the "pattern"[79] which concerns him; so in his approach to a previous era of history it is only such aspects of its thought as may be useful to him in which Williams is interested. The manners, physical circumstances, and spirit of the age, hold little appeal for him. This is clearly seen in his treatment of the Middle Ages. In The Place of the Lion, Damaris Tighe, a student of "the sub-Platonic philosophers"[80] adopts a superior attitude to the Christian writers of the medieval period. She speaks of their "superstitious slavery" and "emotional opportunism."[81] Part of the lesson she has to learn in the course of the novel is to appreciate the truth inherent in their religious attitude to life : that if one's philosophy is believed to be the truth then it must be lived out in practice every day. For Damaris, this attitude is summed up in the words of a hymn written by

---

79. Ibid., p.v.
80. Place of the Lion, p.24.
81. Loc. cit.

"a medieval priest" - written, in fact, by Peter Abelard. They are :

"O quanta qualia
sunt illa Sabbata."[82]

Helen Waddell gives as the translation of the first stanza the following lines :

How mighty are the Sabbaths,
How mighty and how deep,
That the high courts of heaven
To everlasting keep.
What peace unto the weary,
What pride unto the strong,
When God in whom is all things
Shall be all things to men.[83]

The Middle Ages are important in so far as they provide the example of an age which strove, however unsuccessfully, to achieve a state where "God in whom is all things" would "be all things to men."

On the other hand, Abelard, in The Place of the Lion, also symbolises what is wrong with Damaris Tighe. She has a vision of him which is in reality a projection of her own condition of spiritual stagnation. Abelard appears to her with a face "like a vile corpse." He is croaking "strange and meaningless words. Individualiter, essentialiter...."[84] H.O. Taylor in The Medieval Mind quotes a comment of Abelard's upon the thought of William of Champeaux :

"At this William changed his opinion," continues Abaelard, "and taught that the genus existed in each individual not

---

82. Ibid., p.132.

83. Helen Waddell, ed. with trans. Medieval Latin Lyrics (London, 1929), p.163.

84. Place of the Lion, p.133.

> essentialiter but indifferenter or [as some texts read] individualiter."[85]

This refers to the debate upon the question of universals. William of Champeaux was a realist; Abelard tended towards nominalism. The former's minimal belief was in "the independent existence of" universals. For him, they "corresponded with ultimate reality." They were as real as their individual manifestations. For Abelard, on the contrary, universals "were never more than a concept of the mind and... could only be located in the mind."[86] Anthony Durrant, the hero of The Place of the Lion, was a realist. This is seen at a most unphilosophical level in the opinion which his friend, Quentin Sabot, playfully attributes to him, that "ideas are more dangerous than material things."[87] The whole novel revolves upon the reality of "Ideas" in the Platonic sense. Damaris Tighe, while being an expert on neo-Platonism, does not give more than the merest intellectual assent to this proposition. She treats philosophy as an exercise to develop her own critical faculties. In this respect she resembles Abelard, who was

> concerned neither with evolving a philosophy of nature nor with creating a theological system.... His was an essentially critical approach to the meaning of words and concepts. This rather than ideas or speculation was his forte....[88]

---

85. Henry O. Taylor, The Medieval Mind (London, 1911), II, 342.
86. Leff, Medieval Thought, p.111.
87. Place of the Lion, p.12.
88. Leff, Medieval Thought, p.107.

Criticism demands detachment; and Williams condemns both Abelard and Heloise for their cold, detached approach to philosophy. The novel gives little place to the brilliance, the flamboyance, or the passion of Abelard. He is there chiefly to symbolise two approaches to philosophy : the one praiseworthy, the other to be condemned. That dialectical skill which made him so colourful a figure in his day, and so influential throughout the remainder of the Middle Ages, is no concern of Williams's.[89] There is no attempt to realise the intellectual climate of the twelfth century. Williams was interested in the Middle Ages for what they could teach the present age. One misses in him that vivid sense of, and sincere respect for, those aspects of the past which actually characterise it as past. Where his works are set in the contemporary world, and only introduce theological or mystical ideas from an earlier period in so far as they are relevant to the problems of the present, then they achieve success within the limitations of Williams's style. But when he attempted to use a framework derived from the past, then his lack of feeling for historical period hindered him. Unfortunately, I believe this to have been the case with his Taliessin cycle.

---

89. Though see Descent of the Dove, pp.109-110.

Of all Williams's works, that which would appear most obviously to exhibit the author's interest in the Middle Ages is the Taliessin cycle. In order to appreciate this work, it is necessary to understand what Williams understood by the term "myth." Mrs. Shideler has written that "for Williams, a myth consists of a narrative that has acquired significance beyond its own immediacy -- that is, a myth is a story functioning as an image."[1] This definition forces one to consider what Williams understood by "image", and this is defined by Mrs. Shideler in the following terms : "an image exists in its own right; it points to something greater than itself; and represents in itself that greatness to which it refers."[2] In a footnote, she adds :

> This definition is modified from that in The Figure of Beatrice, 7, where Williams is following Coleridge. But Coleridge's definition contains the term "derives from", instead of "points to" and "refers", thereby suggesting a metaphysical implication which I do not want to discuss here.[3]

However, it is this "metaphysical implication" which is all important for a proper appreciation of Williams's method. He, himself, defines

---

1. Mary McDermott Shideler, The Theology of Romantic Love: A Study in the Writings of Charles Williams (New York, 1962), p.45.
2. Shideler, Theology of Romantic Love, pp.20-21.
3. Shideler, N[16] to Chap. 1 on page 213.

"mythical" as having "a profound spiritual relevance."[4] Mrs. Ridler in her "Introduction" to The Image of the City says of A.E. Waite, to whom reference has already been made, that his "influence had been an important one for" Williams.[5] At the moment, I wish only to discuss Williams's possible debt to A.E. Waite's book, The Hidden Church of the Holy Grail (1909), which "had its place among the origins of... [Williams's] Arthurian studies, as entries in his Notebook show."[6] In The Figure of Arthur, Williams asks: "Is the king to be there [in the Arthurian legend] for the sake of the Grail or not?"[7] His answer, as embodied in his poems, was in the affirmative. It had been with the Grail legends that Waite had been pre-occupied in The Hidden Church. Of these legends, Waite said that "they offer in common form a presentation of the soul's chronicle."[8] In this respect the Grail legends do not stand alone. Waite's claim is that "the old chronicles and the great antique legends are valuable" because "they assist us towards the things which are eternal."[9] They are all, in fact, "symbolical presentations of one subject."[10] They are all records of man's attempt mystically to comprehend the divine. The examples which Waite gives include the Zohar, the Tarot cards, "the Greek Mysteries", and "the great Quest

---

4. Williams, Image of the City, p.108.
5. Ridler, Image of the City, p.xxv.
6. Ridler, loc. cit.
7. Williams, Arthurian Torso, p.83.
8. Waite, The Hidden Church, p.647.
9. Waite, p.5.
10. Waite, p.602.

of Galahad."[11] All of these are to be found somewhere in Williams's writings, where they function as images of the spiritual reality of the universe. Williams, himself, seems to have viewed the myths of antiquity as "all inadequate ideas of God."[12] Thus, in The Greater Trumps, the Egyptian god Horus is recognised by Sybil Coningsby as a type of Messias. In his novels, a myth, with its spiritual ramifications, is introduced into a contemporary setting with aspects of which it is identified. The present-day characters and events gain in significance from this identification. For instance, at the conclusion of The Greater Trumps, Sybil Coningsby becomes merged with two of the figures in the Tarot pack, namely, the Juggler and the Fool.[13] This is in virtue of the fact that the power of love in her has effected the reconciliation with which the novel ends. She is an image of divine providence resolving the apparent dualism of time in the unity of the eternal One. In the Coleridgean sense, Sybil Coningsby is a symbol or image of God.

The situation in Williams's Taliessin cycle is different. There, the myth of the Grail is also the main narrative. Theoretically, from Williams's point of view, since this myth is, in itself, "a presentation of the soul's chronicle," the spiritual truth contained in it should be immediately apprehensible. But, in fact, it functions as an allegory. Mrs. Shideler says of "Dante's Comedy and Williams's poetry and novels" that they "are allegories, written to convey ideas, but the ideas in

---

11. Waite, loc. cit.
12. Witchcraft, p.40.
13. Greater Trumps, p.227.

question... are presented in images."[14] This is true of the Comedy and Williams's novels. In them the characters are "natural symbols".[15] They have an existence independent of the significance which the author attributes to them by his manipulation of them in his plot. This could have been true also of the figures in Williams's version of the Arthurian legends had they been vividly enough realised as a part of that setting. The difficulty with Williams's treatment of these figures is that to recognise the particular spiritual significance which he attaches to them, they have to be interpreted in the light either of notes supplied elsewhere by Williams, or of a commentary by someone who knew him, like C.S. Lewis.

Williams says of Bors and Percivale that they are "at once knights and capuchins."[16] Yet, Percivale has a remarkably inactive career. He is seen at one time playing his harp at a window (TTL. 46), and at another inhaling "the fine air of philosophical amusement" (TTL. 85). He is so little realised as a knight that he is reduced merely to a symbol of "the spiritual intellect concerned with the significance of things and with the Quest."[17] Apart from this note, one would only arrive with difficulty at a clear apprehension of what he stands for. As for Bors, he represents primarily marriage as "a Way of the Soul."[18] To some

---

14. Shideler, Theology of Romantic Love, p.20.
15. Dorothy L. Sayers, Introduction to The Divine Comedy :1. Hell, Penguin Books, 1949, p.13.
16. Williams, Image of the City, p.177.
17. Williams, loc. cit.
18. Religion and Love, p.4.

extent he is more fully realised than Peredurle. An active life does not preclude sanctity. He helped considerably in the founding of Arthur's Kingdom :

The banner of Bors is abroad....

Bors is up; his wife Elayne behind him
mends the fame, gets food from Gaul; the south
is up with hammer and stirrup, and holds Thames mouth. (WTL.15)

At Mount Badon, Taliessin "saw Bors fling / company after company to the aid of the king..." (WTL. 16). He became the king's "lieutenant in the southern coast" (WTL. 24). However, the two poems which are named after Bors, only use him as a starting-point to discuss certain of Williams's principal ideas. Thus in Bors to Elayne: The Fish of Broceliande, the nature of his experience of romantic love is described in terms of images of streams, pools, and fish. The result is that the discussion tends to be a statement about a certain aspect of human psychology, quite independent of any particular experiencing subject. Bors proves to be irrelevant to the poem's real purpose. This happens also in Bors to Elayne: on the King's Going. The theme of the poem is exchange. At the beginning of it, Bors and Elayne are representative of that natural exchange which operates in any society's division of labour. Bors says to his wife : "my fieldsmen ate and your women served"; and he continues :

corn comes to the mill and the flour to the house,
bread of love for your women and my men.... (WTL. 42)

A properly organised community depends upon a willing interdependence. However, the greater part of the poem is concerned with the king's new

coinage, and the problem of exchange is discussed in relation to that subject. Bors and Blayne, instead of developing into characters, become mere symbols of one aspect of exchange. Throughout the remainder of the cycle the name of Bors is scarcely mentioned; and the reference to him in connection with the achievement of the Grail makes little sense apart from Williams's notes on the subject. The relevant lines occur in The Last Voyage, and describe Bors standing with Galahad and Perceivale on the deck of "the ship of Solomon" :

> Bors, mailed in black, completing the trine,
> their action in Logres, kneeling on the deck to their right,
> the flesh of fatherhood, unique as they in the Will,
> prayed still for the need and the bliss of his household (TV, 85)

What these lines are supposed to convey is to be found in two different comments by Williams. They are :

> Bors is the ordinary man, married, with children, the king's servant. But he is also the spiritual intellect concerned as it must be with earthly things;[19]

and,

> Bors is in the chapel at Sarras [that is, the destination of the ship, the Grail city] as well as Galahad and Perceivale. This is what relates the Achievement to every man.[20]

But before Bors can symbolise spirituality in relation to "everyman", he must first be effectively realised as a man.

One reason why this does not happen is the basic structure of the

---

19. Williams, Image of the City, p.177.
20. Williams, Arthurian Torso, p.84.

Kora in Hell cycle as a series of loosely connected poems. Mrs. Ridler draws attention to the "blurb to Kora in Hell through Leaves drafted by Williams himself," where it is said that "the poems do not so much tell a story or describe a process as express states or principles of experience. The names and incidents of the Arthurian myth are taken as starting points for investigation and statement on common and profound experience."[21] Because of this Mrs. Ridler adds that "the chronological sequence of the poems, helpful though it is at first to have them arranged in a tentative order as Professor Lewis has done, is not finally important."[22] I am forced to agree with Mrs. Ridler; but I feel the accuracy of the description of the cycle given in the "blurb" also sums up why the work does not succeed. Williams himself once said, "in every great Myth the technique and the meaning are one; only it does no harm to realize that the tale, as well as the meaning, has to be kept going."[23] In the "blurb" Williams is self-confessed as having no interest in "the tale." Even more relevant is this piece of criticism by Williams on Blake :

> It is true we cannot be very much interested in those great forms themselves [Blake's "great superhuman beings"]....
> What he thought mattered was not "individuals" but "states"; it was these states of being which he desired to define and declare, and individuals in his verse - even his own great individuals - are only there to reveal the states of being in which they exist. Poetically, this was no doubt a fault

---

21. Ridler, Image of the City, pp. lxiv-lxv.
22. Ridler, p.lxv.
23. Williams, Image of the City, p.192.

> or at least a misfortune.... It cannot very well be done in verse, for it is only, on the whole, through the individuals that we know the states to which they belong.[24]

It is almost incredible that Williams could write that, and yet fail to make characters, like Percivale and Bors, into "individuals." They, too, like Blake's figures, only symbolize certain "states of being." From these two passages it would appear that Williams noticed in other writers those very mistakes which he was himself perpetrating in his Taliessin cycle.

At first sight, it does seem odd that Williams did neglect the element of story, for his novels prove him to have considerable facility as a narrative writer. I would suggest that at least one reason might be a complete lack of sympathy with the romance genre in which the Arthurian legend had been preserved. Unlike most of the nineteenth century medievalists, Williams, in his book, Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind, shows no great appreciation of Spenser.[25] As for Malory, Williams says of him that "the main part of his novel was irrelevant to the theme" of the Grail.[26] He "fills his pages with all sorts of things which may be fascinating but are not (in our sense) mythical."[27] E.W. Parker has said of Malory's Quest of the Holy Grail that in it he turned from "fantasies irrelevant to real life," and from "moral illustrations," to "the

---

24. Forgiveness of Sins, pp. 177-178.
25. Reason and Beauty, pp.51-62, esp. pp.61-62.
26. Williams, Image of the City, p.180.
27. Williams, p.188.

interplay of character and situation."[29] Williams appears to have had little idea of what was Malory's true achievement. In his Taliessin cycle, he came dangerously close to reducing the Grail legend once more to a complex of "moral illustrations." Where Williams used the Grail legend simply as a symbol of spiritual reality, and introduced it into a contemporary framework, as in his novel, War in Heaven, then he was relatively successful. As far as his Taliessin cycle is concerned, his concentration only upon those "hints"[29] of spiritual significance, the "suggestiveness" of which "Malory does not seem to have understood,"[30] has two unfortunate consequences. In the first place, events preceding the incident upon which Williams concentrates, even when they are supposed to be of great significance, are often summarily dismissed. For example, Williams wrote in an article :

> It is immediately after his exhibition of courtesy towards someone who has injured him - this is the significant, if accidental detail - that we find Lancelot riding towards the mysterious castle of King Pellas, who is the Keeper of the Grail.... [31]

In other words, it was Lancelot's intention of goodwill which opened up for him a way of spiritual achievement, no matter how odd that way proved to be. However, in The Son of Lancelot, the only reference to this significant link in the chain of cause and effect is to say that :

---

28. R.W. Barber, Arthur of Albion (London, 1961), pp.130-131.
29. Williams, Image of the City, p.100.
30. Williams, p.107.
31. Williams, p.139.

> ... nine moons had waned
> since Lancelot, ridden on a merciful errand, came
> that night to the house.... (TKL, 56)

Yet, this is the type of detail, the significance of which Williams repeatedly stresses in his novels. To take an example from All Hallows' Eve : it is after Richard Furnivall has disinterestedly wished that his wife, Lester, were alive for the sake of his friend, Jonathan Drayton, that he is allowed his first vision of her.[32]

In the second place, this concentration upon the spiritual import of Malory's "hints" tends to cause certain minor incidents to be elevated into moments of great significance, for which there has been no narrative preparation. The clearest example of this is to be found in The Coming of Galahad. Williams has written that "we are... affected ... by such... things of possible significance as... the laying to rest of the High Prince in the King's bed."[33] There is a great deal of tragic irony in that incident, and Williams captures this in the line : "The queen all night lay thinking of Lancelot's son" (TKL, 69). But Williams wishes to define the situation much more rigidly, thereby making it an illustration of one of his principal doctrines. This is the reason for having Taliessin think about :

> ... the king's body whose instead
> of Arthur Galahad that night should be,
> Nolayne's son instead of the king's, Lancelot's

---

32. See All Hallows' Eve, p.32.
33. Williams, Image of the City, p.191.

> instead of Guinevere's, all taken at their word,
> their professions, their oaths; the third heaven heard
> their declarations, and measured them the medium of exchange.
> (TT, 60)

The first three and a half lines deal with the human situation, but the meaning of the other two and a half lines does not derive naturally from them. Instead, it is difficult to understand those lines without not only a knowledge of what Williams implies by "exchange," but also of what he considers one of the peculiar modes of experiencing that spiritual phenomenon. His expression of this is to be found in a passage in He Came Down from Heaven:

> ... unless something is done, nothing happens. Unless devotion is given to a thing which must prove false in the end, the thing that is true in the end cannot enter.... the sacrifice must be made ready, and the fire will strike on another altar. So much Cain saw, and could not guess that the very purpose of his offering was to make his brother's acceptable.[34]

This is the key to Williams's interpretation of the tangled relationships of Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot, and Nelyne. Two ways by which the High Prince might have come are through the marriage of Arthur and Guinevere or the love of Lancelot and Guinevere. Yet neither of those ways was that decided upon in "the third heaven." Instead, Arthur and Guinevere find themselves, in the end, superfluous in the achievement of the divine purpose. On the other hand, Lancelot supposes he is giving his love to Guinevere, while all the time it is really Nelyne who is receiving his

---

34. He Came Down from Heaven, p.25.

attentions. The Grail hero, "the thing that is true in the end," comes because Lancelot's "devotion is given to a thing which must prove false in the end," that is Nelayne. She has been made through magic contrivance to appear like Guinevere. All this explanation which I have given is meant to be conveyed in the poem by saying : "the third heaven heard / their declarations of love, and measured them the medium of exchange." One feels that Williams is guilty of a fault which he detected in Wordsworth. He says of the latter :

> Wordsworth assumed that merely to mention seduction would make us disapprove of it; but in poetry this is not so, we must be urged by the poetic force. Poetry has to do all its own work; in return it has all its own authority.[39]

Williams seems to have felt that for him to append the statement of one of his doctrines to an incident in which he believed he has detected its operation, is to avoid Wordsworth's error. The point he missed was that the connection between the incident and the statement of doctrine must be poetically realised, and not just arbitrarily asserted. Williams wanted to make "a Rite" (WW, 69) out of "the laying to rest" of Galahad. He forgot that the strength of a genuine rite is in the weight of traditional meaning behind it.

When Williams chose to elevate an incident such as the foregoing, what he rejected in the process was the traditional world of romance literature. He wrote, for instance, that "we are not so much affected by the pulling of swords out of stones floating in rivers... as by such"

---

39. The English Poetic Mind (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), p.167.

an incident as the ceremonial bedding of Galahad.[36] This is seen in his treatment of magic. Merlin's powers are a matter of "plans and lines" (TPL. 8). With his magician's "wheel of ceremony" he strikes "from the body of air the anatomical / body of light" (TPL. 54). Such a mathematically precise approach to magic leaves little room for it to be used as a metaphor to imply the immensity of the unknown. Indeed, the way Williams uses mathematical imagery throughout his Taliessin cycle causes no considerable uneasiness. He appears to have agreed with Wordsworth that, within a human context, "geometric truth" yielded place only to poetical truth. As applied to literature, it is clear that Williams understood by "geometric truth" the discipline which a poet's art imposes upon his thought. Thus he speaks of the "geometry of... [Pope's] poetic rules."[37] When it came to his own writings, however, Williams frequently seems to have felt that to introduce mathematical terminology was enough to give a sense of disciplined control to his thought. Sometimes this had unfortunate results. The genuineness of much of the mathematical imagery which he used is suspect. Williams once wrote : "'God always geometrises' said Plato, and the Hebrew prophets thought no less."[38] The allusion in the latter half of the sentence is explained by another passage in the same work where Williams speaks of "the swift and geometrical glory seen by Isaiah and Ezekiel,

---

36. Williams, Image of the City, p.191.
37. Reason and Beauty, p.30.
38. He Came Down from Heaven, p.34.

the fire of the wheels and the flash of the living creatures."[39] Though Isaiah and Ezekiel may have described their visions partially in terms borrowed from mathematics or a related science, those terms are being used, on the whole, pictorially, as a way of expressing their ineffable experience. They are not seeking to convey some precise mathematical truth. This is also the case with Williams's own use of mathematical imagery. He uses it mainly for its connotative rather than its denotative power. This may be illustrated from The Coming of Palomides where he speaks of "Gospels trigonometrical" which "measured the height of God-in-man" (TCP, 33). The function of the term "trigonometrical" is to create an atmosphere of mathematical precision. It is applied to the Christian Gospel of Incarnation because of the emphasis in the latter upon the Trinity. As far as mathematics is concerned, I suspect the usage is of little relevance. Moreover, Gaul is said to be the home of the "Gospels trigonometrical." These are a new discovery for Palomides the Arab. Historically, on the other hand, it "was from... [the Moslem, al Battani (c. A.D. 850-928)] that the West derived its first knowledge of Trigonometry."[40]

To some extent, this stress upon mathematical imagery is a result of Williams's reaction against the vague use of symbolism simply to evoke an atmosphere of mystery. For instance, he wrote in He Came Down From Heaven that

> the word glory, to English ears, usually means no more than a kind of many bright blue. But the maze should be, though

---

39. Ibid., p.31.

40. Dawson, Making of Europe, p.121, N.[3].

> It generally is not, exact, and the brightness should be that of a geometrical pattern.[41]

For Williams's Arthurian poet, Taliesin, "verse [must] grow nature with pure feet" (HE, 15). It seems to me that Williams carried his reaction too far. His stress upon "geometric truth" undermines his ability to realize that sense of mystery and of wonder which one would have expected always to be present in any merely human expression of the transcendental. The Arthurian legend, with its inherent sense of the marvellous, could have provided Williams with such an opportunity; but his preoccupation with his scheme of fairly rigid symbolism seems to have precluded this. On the other hand, however, he does not compensate by building up a realistic picture of the physical world of the Middle Ages. The one poem in which there is some attempt at this is The Crowning of Arthur, but even here the emphasis is upon the fact that "Logres heraldically flaunted the king's state" (TTL, 19).[42] It is the significance which Williams attributes to the armorial bearings of the various characters which is stressed. He almost turns his own description of physical objects into a system of heraldic symbols. Yet, this poem is relatively successful, for one is also convinced of the reality of the "thick-tossed torches," the "tall candles," and "the beasts of the banners" (TTL, 19). One is conscious of how the firelight is "tributaried by torches and candles," and appears to pour "mid the burning mail" (TTL, 19). My criticism is

---

41. He Came Down from Heaven, p.33.
42. Italics mine.

that too often elsewhere Williams says with Rora : "colour is art, but my heart counts the doctrine" (TTT. 42).[43]

This criticism affects my estimate of Williams's handling of his imagery of the body. I have already referred, in my second chapter, to his concept of the body as "an index to the structure of a greater whole."[44] This gives rise to what C.S. Lewis has called Williams's "ruthless physiological symbolism",[45] the two most striking examples of which are to be found in the poems, The Vision of the Empire and The Coming of Galahad, both in Taliessin through Logres. In the second of these, a person's decision, at a moment of choice, is spoken of in terms of "digestion" (the consideration of the case) and the body's "rejection" of waste material (the alternative which has not been taken) (TTT. 71). Williams associates this idea of the symbolism of the body with Wordsworth's lines :

> ... the human form
> To me became an index of delight,
> Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.[46]

---

43. "It was said once that your hair was the colour of corn;
he who said so was capable only to adorn
the margin of parchments drawn in schools of Gaul;
* * * * *
colour is art but my heart counts the doctrine." (TTT. 42)
The allusion here may be to Rossetti's lines in The Blessed Damozel:
"Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn."

44. Williams, Image of the City, p.81.

45. Lewis, Arthurian Torso, p.167.

46. Quoted by Williams, Image of the City, p.80. See Wordsworth, The Prelude, Book viii, lines 279-281.

He does say that "Wordsworth himself did not develop the idea."[47] Most probably Williams derived his symbolism of the body from his knowledge of Jewish mysticism. Sidney Spencer says that in the Zohar, "the human form has a cosmic significance. It is a microcosm, which includes all things, higher and lower, in itself."[48] Anne Ridler suggests that "the foundations of Williams's thought about the symbolism of the body"[49] were laid by his reading of A.E. Waite's The Secret Doctrine in Israel. She refers specifically to the "frontispiece" of the book which "shows a diagram of the Sephirotic Tree laid out upon the figure of a man, with the different properties related to the different parts of the body...."[50] On the inside of the covers of the first issue of Taliessin through Logres (1938), a woman's form is superimposed upon a map of Europe. This is explained in The Vision of the Empire.

Throughout his Taliessin cycle, Williams lays great stress upon the reality of the physical world, and, in particular, upon the importance to be attached to the flesh in its proper place. Caucasia is the name he gives to that region which represents the flesh in his geographical myth of man's capacities. According to his symbolism of the body, Caucasia is the buttocks. In one of his loveliest passages, Williams makes the poet, Taliessin, describe Caucasia in the following terms:

---

47. Williams, p.60.
48. Spencer, p.193.
49. Ridler, Image of the City, p.xxv.
50. Ridler, loc. cit.

... "The limbs
that wander among the roses of Genoasia are golden-limbed.
I have seen from its blue skies a flurry of snow
bright as a sudden irrepressible smile
drive across a golden-fleeced landscape." (SE. 43)[51]

What Williams appears to be attempting is to redeem the human body from a false sense of shame which a certain species of prudery has attached to it. He says, for example, that Onuonia is now "the lost name, the fool's shame" (TTL. 7). Elsewhere he wrote that the "great world and energy of the body have been either deprecated or devotionalized; and by devotionalized I mean turned into a pale imitation of 'substance,' of spirit...."[52] What he hoped to do was to find a mean "between the spiritualizers and the sensualizers - the idealists and the sensualists... ..."[53] Therefore, though he says that "the human body" is an index of spiritual truth, and that "we must go to the text of philosophy to understand the subjects actually present in the index of the body";[54] yet he tries to ensure that the physicality of the body is duly recognised and revered. This is Williams in theory; but in practice, on the whole, he does not succeed. This may be partly due to an inherent dis-

---

51. How rare such a passage is in Williams, and how quickly his descriptive invention could be exhausted, may be learned from a comparison of this passage with some later lines based upon it:
"... 'And so, in a high ~~ethereal~~ shire,
are flashing flaunts of snow across azure skies,
golden fleeces, and gardens of deep roses...'" (SE. 43)
Here, in a less heightened form, the earlier images are repeated in the expectation that they will be more powerful for having been previously established. However, I suspect that this is an instance of "symbolic reduction" (see Martin Foss, Symbol and Metaphor, p.57). In other words, the images have ceased to carry conviction in themselves, but depend upon their earlier associations for their effectiveness.

52. Williams, Image of the City, p.69.

53. Figure of Beatrice, p.64. 54. loc. cit.

tract of consciousness. For example, he does characterize evil as "the turmoil of the mind of sensation" (TT, 12). Or it may be another result of his admiration for the ideal of "geometric truth." In The Coming of Palomides, the central incident is the effect the sight of Iseult's naked arm has upon the Saracen.[55] For a moment, the arm does seem real. It is composed of "curves of golden life." However, these "curves" are said to "define / the straightness of a perfect line"; and soon the actual arm is lost in "the diagram of desire."[56] The arm's "blissful nakedness" is overwhelmed by the "unions metaphysical" which it indicates (TT, 34-35).

Another point which the poem, The Crowning of Arthur, raises is the extent of Williams's sense of period.[57] His descriptions of the knights' armour in this poem are consistent with the traditional picture of the High Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the period in which the poems are supposed to be set historically is somewhere between A.D. 500 and A.D. 600.[58]

---

55. It is interesting to compare this with the effect that Rosamund's arm had upon Philip Travers in Shadows of Fantasy, p.56.

56. Italics mine.

57. Dorothy L. Sayers in her Introduction to James I by Charles Williams (London: Arthur Barker, 1951), on page xii, has the following to say: "... he was singularly free from that hypertrophied 'sense of period' on which our generation tends to pride itself rather too much.... To make 'period' the sole criterion to which human thoughts and deeds can be referred involves the total subjection of actuality to relativity, and opens between ourselves and our forefathers a gulf over which understanding cannot stride. For Charles Williams, that gulf did not exist." To recognize the sameness of human nature at all times may be the first essential of the historical imagination; but the second surely is to accept the basic differences which separate age from age.

58. Williams, Image of the City, p.171.

This is a relatively unimportant point. More disturbing is the deliberate anachronism of twice introducing Wordsworth into the cycle (TFL. 55, 72). Also, I am made uneasy by finding Taliessin's early career as a poet described in terms borrowed from what was in Williams's time the accepted account of Shakespeare's early life. Thus it is said that Taliessin made his living :

> ... by singing verses, by writing
> letters or carrying, by script-copying or fighting -
> nay, if need were, by carrying horses
> for the dukes of the Empire whose courses took them to Byzantium.
> (SS. 8)

Williams did try to capture some sense of period by the introduction of astrological imagery. In The Coming of Palomides this is derived from the medieval concept of the planetary spheres and their influences. Here Williams redefines the significance of the planets according to his own philosophy. Thus Jupiter becomes the planet of "irony" and of "defeated irony" (TFL. 74). However, the allocation of these two terms to the two moons of Jupiter does not make them any more real for the reader. All that happens is that he has to learn to translate Williams's ideas into planetary imagery. There appears to be no necessary connection between the nature of the planet Jupiter (certainly not according to medieval astrology)[59] and Williams's attribution of meaning to it. Indeed, this suspicion is re-inforced by the fact that, as C.S. Lewis points out,[60] Williams has made a mistake, and Jupiter actually has four moons. Williams's use of similar medieval imagery in his novels is much more effec-

59. See Lewis, Discarded Image, pp.105-106.
60. See Lewis, Arthurian Torso, p.171.

tive. In The Place of the Lion the archetypal Power whose quality is that of balance manifests itself as an eagle. This image is probably derived from Dante's "eagle of Jupiter" which symbolises "Divine Justice."[61] In the novel, the connection between the eagle and balance is carefully prepared for by the following syllogistic development : Anthony Barrent is aware of balance as the sensation of flying an aeroplane;[62] and then the aeroplane is associated with the archetypal eagle;[63] so that the final stage of associating balance with the eagle follows on naturally. There is an instance of a very successful use of medieval imagery in The Crowning of Arthur. The following stanza depicts the armorial bearing on Bors's shield :

> A pelican in golden piety struck well
> the triple bloody drops from its wound;
> in strong nurture of instinct, it smote
> for its young its breast; the shield of Bors
> bore its rich fervour, to itself most fell (TWL, 20).

As a factual description this is quite convincing. But it is also a clear indication of the character of Bors. He is a Christ-figure in his self-sacrifice and compassion. This is how one medieval bestiary explicates the symbolism of the pelican :

> ... Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the originator and maker of all created things, begets us and calls us into being out of nothing. We, on the contrary, strike him in the face.

---

61. Figure of Beatrice, p.195.
62. Place of the Lion, p.60.
63. Ibid., pp.92-93.

> As the prophet Isaiah says: "I have borne children and exalted them and truly they have scorned me." We have struck him in the face by devoting ourselves to the creation rather than the creator.
>
> That was why he ascended into the height of the cross, and, his side having been pierced, there came from it blood and water for our salvation and eternal life.[64]

Williams's success lies in the fact that the pelican was a recognised symbol during the Middle Ages. That it should appear on Bors's shield is consistent with the practice of the age in which the poem is set. Coats of arms are, themselves, symbolical. So that Williams has here been able to make his own symbolism derive naturally from the framework of his cycle.

The reason why I said that Williams's depiction of his Dark Age heroes in the armour of high chivalry was unimportant is that (to follow Lewis's chronology) the first twenty-seven or -eight poems are all supposed to take place before "history began" (TWL, 1). They are set, therefore, in a mythical era; and, as Williams has said, in a myth "we need ask for nothing but interior consistency."[65] Williams's difficulty is that his period of enchantments does not characterize a world out free from history. Indeed, his cycle is introduced by a poem, the Prelude to The Region of the Summer Stars, which tries to summarize the

---

64. T.H. White, ed. and trans. The Book of Beasts: A Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century (London, 1954), p.153.

65. Williams, Arthurian Torso, p.80.

history of the first three or four centuries of Christianity. Thus, though the mythical setting of his cycle allows considerable licence, "interior consistency" cannot stand the strain of such obvious anachronisms as the introduction of Wordsworth or the eighteenth century town of Onsk.[66]

Though Williams did not appreciate the conventions of romance, he might have used an awareness of the historical reality of the Middle Ages, to create a world for his myth which would have given it its own "necessity of being" (TWL, 88). However, his general attitude to history precluded that. To begin with, though Williams, as I have tried to show earlier, had a highly developed philosophy of time; on the other hand, he had no philosophy of history in any reputable sense of the term. For example, Williams shows no appreciation of historical process. He says of the "evolutionary vision of the world, of its scene of life and development, wherein the Roman Empire is only a breathing space and Egypt a moment's advance or retrogression," that the "vision of this [is] hardly to be given to any Christian [in his cycle], because of the comparative unimportance of the individual...."[67] An even more startling statement of Williams's thoughts on history occurs in The Figure of Arthur :

> In a sense, of course, history is itself a myth.... We may issue from it into other judgements - doctrinal, moral, historic. But so doing we enter into another kind of thought and judge by other tests - more important perhaps, but not the same.[68]

---

66. On "Onsk" see Robert Conquest, "The Art of the Enemy," Essays in Criticism, vii (January 1957), 44.

67. Williams, Image of the City, p.172.

68. Williams, Arthurian Torso, p. 80. Italics mine.

There are two very important points here : one is that history may be regarded as a myth which, according to Williams's interpretation, is a story with "a profound spiritual relevance";[69] and the other is that to treat history as history is secondary to treating it as a repository of spiritual truth.

On the basis of the whole foregoing discussion I think it is clear that Williams is like those authors of "the legends of the soul"[70] of whom A.E. Waite said that "they may present... their particular forms of thought in the guise of a legend of yesterday, but they are really the legends of tomorrow, the expressed heart of expectation and not a retrospective review."[71] Williams had little interest in the past as such. His real interest lay in bringing home to men and women how possible true and profound spiritual achievement was for all of them.

It has been said repeatedly, however, that Williams managed more successfully than most to make the Arthurian material consistent with what he wished to say. This I find hard to believe. Mrs. Shideler has said that Williams's "major contribution to the great stream of Christian thought was, I believe, in his exposition of the Affirmative Way."[72] Yet this central doctrine suffers considerably from the nature of Williams's materials. In the first place, Williams himself claims that "Lancelot... is the chief figure of the Way of Affirmations."[73]

---

69. Williams, Image of the City, p.188.
70. Waite, The Hidden Church, p.6.
71. Waite, p.593.
72. Shideler, Theology of Romantic Love, p.6.
73. Williams, Arthurian Torso, p.87.

If this is true, then, on the basis of the text of the cycle, the Way of the Affirmation of Images is an extremely unreliable one to follow. I do not intend, here, to unravel what Williams really meant by this. Another candidate for "the Way of the Affirmations" might be Taliesin. But, whereas I have tried to show in an earlier chapter that Williams's basic understanding of this doctrine was of the possibility of realising a true spiritual state in the midst of an active secular career, this is, in fact, only half-heartedly asserted in Taliesin's case. Apart from The Calling of Taliesin, the poet is usually depicted either as a spectator or a presiding figure. Moreover, there is great stress laid in Taliesin's Song of the Unicorn upon his deliberate celibacy. This is probably due to the influence upon Williams of the literary character, Dante, rather than of the historical person. Taliesin is a direct successor of Vincenzo in Williams's early play, The Chaste Wanton.[74] This forces one to come to the conclusion that Taliesin only represents the Way of the Affirmation of Images in so far as he uses poetic imagery. This type of literal-minded interpretation of his central doctrine is quite foreign to the Williams of the best prose essays and of the novels. The only other likely candidate to represent "the Way of the Affirmations" is Bors. He ought not to be considered apart from Galahad and Percivale, because theoretically they are none of them separate individuals. They "are functions each of the other."[75] According to Williams, the story

---

74. See above, p.272.

75. Williams, Image of the City, p.193.

of the Grail,

> is the tale of Galahad; it is the tale of the mystical way; but also it is the tale of the universal way. It is not, as in Tennyson, only for the elect; it is for all. It is in this sense that the three lords of the Quest are of importance.[76]

So far this is excellent. The tragedy is that Williams never realised his idea in practice. Tennyson shied away from the Grail story because of its concomitants of Catholic spirituality. This aspect of it tended to make its goal inaccessible to the lay person. Williams was determined to change this. His three Grail heroes are supposed to represent aspects of one soul. Unfortunately, his Galahad and Perceivale inherit from their predecessors all the exclusiveness of the monastic ideal of spirituality. The link with common man, namely Bors, I have already shown is artistically very poorly realised. Moreover, as the three knights hover between being allegorical figures and natural symbols, one is never quite sure whether they do really represent three different aspects of one soul upon the Way, or three different degrees of that Way. If the former is true then "the trine" (WW, 85) represents "the Way of the Affirmations"; if the latter is true, then two members of "the trine" represent the Way of Rejection and the third, the Way of Affirmation. Personally, I cannot resolve the ambiguity; but I feel its existence undermines the total significance of Williams's cycle.

If one insists that the poems in Williams's cycle should be treated

---

76. Williams, Arthurian Torso, p.84.

just on their own merits, and not upon their place in the development of the cycle, then one encounters a different set of difficulties. The first is simply that some of the poems are quite obviously open-ended. They either derive from a situation to be found in an earlier poem, or lead into one not as yet presented. Typical of the latter is The Calling of Arthur. The picture of King Cradlemas, whose "high aged voice equals with callous comfort" (VII. 14), is very effective as a description of the representative of the last stages of an effete civilisation. He is to be replaced by Arthur. However, within the compass of the poem, there is little possibility of developing the character of the latter. The underlying narrative thread in the poem leads one naturally to expect a sequel; and it is difficult to assess the one part without reference to the other. Indeed, Williams, by choosing a story so well-known as the Arthurian legend, could hardly refer to any part of it without reviving memories of the whole. He could, of course, have taken a single idea, or set of characters, or even one incident, and made it function symbolically in a contemporary context. This is his method in his early lyrics. For example, in Poems of Conformity, the name "Samos" is used to designate the City of God.[77] On the other hand, he could have centred his response to the Arthurian material upon one particular episode, and have developed this. Instead, he gives so many episodes from the legend, that the total framework passes itself upon the reader. The real problem would appear to be that Williams is not dealing with a

77. See "The Wave," Poems of Conformity (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), p.115.

mythology, a complex system of symbolism embodying supra-rational truth. He is using myth which accomplishes the same end by means of a relatively simple narrative structure.

However, Williams increases his own difficulties by operating two levels of figurative language at the one time. One level is bound to the Arthurian framework; the other derives from his desire to convey his thought, not through narrative but through imagery. A tension is present between the two. I have already referred to this in his two poems upon Dore. A minor instance of this occurs in The Meditation of Mordred. The main concern of that poem is to exhibit the type of mind found in a character such as Mordred. To this end is directed the description of the sensuality of the Emperor of P'o-l'u living in a "green palace" among "his tiny-footed, slant-eyed wives" (SE, 49). This is part of Mordred's daydreaming. So too are the slighting references to "the Grail" and the "cauldron of Ceridwèn" (SE, 48). They indicate Mordred's rejection of his Christian culture and his Celtic ancestry in favour of some exotic way of life. On the other hand, I feel the references to Arthur's troops as being "elms" (SE, 47), and to the mob of London as being "a forest" (SE, 48), while they may be effective enough images in themselves, do not grow naturally out of the context. These metaphors appear to have been imposed upon the poem by Williams in his anxiety to pack it with symbolism. Too often in Williams this is merely the translation of a simple idea into cryptic language.

Considering that the use of imagery, in the sense of constructing a poem dependent for its meaning upon the relationship of one particular

metaphoric expression to another, has been the dominant mode of the twentieth century, one is forced to ask why Williams was unsuccessful in his use of it. I would say that, firstly, his aims were different from those of the majority of writers who use imagery. He was concerned with the moral and spiritual condition of the twentieth century; and his great desire was to show to men and women a proper way of life. This had to be objectively presented. Very often the strength of imagery lies in its power to project the inner consciousness of the poet. This was not Williams's concern. Often imagery is used to embody "states of being", to make them immediately apprehensible to the reader. W.H. Auden, in his assertion that Williams was interested "in states of being rather than in individuals,"[78] does not go far enough. What tended to preoccupy Williams was not "being" but "becoming." He was concerned not so much with any "state" as with a "way." Thus narrative, of some form or other, was the appropriate method for his aims. In that mode, moral and spiritual processes could be shown at work in ordinary men and women.

Secondly, despite all Williams's insistence upon the importance of the material creation, he seemed to be singularly ill-equipped to embody this in poetical terms. Anne Ridler has said that "it is chiefly those who, like Charles Williams, look any deep satisfaction in the apprehension of a visual order in painting, who turn to... a diagrammatic order."[79] This is, of course, exactly what Williams did. Tault's aim is less an

---

78. "Charles Williams: A Review Article," The Christian Century, LXXIII (May 1956), 592.

79. Ridler, Image of the City, p.xxv.

ean them a diagram. This is peculiarly irritating in a writer who is constantly reiterating the need to emphasise the reality of the physical world. Williams forgets that a poem should always strive to make its ideas incarnate, not just state them. C.S. Lewis calls him "the poet of the 'defeated senses'",[60] and I believe he is the less in stature because of this. Even St. John of the Cross makes the reader poignantly aware of the physical circumstances which he uses to convey the sense of rapture in the soul who has achieved "union with God by the road of spiritual negation."[61] There is probably a biographical reason for Williams's failure. He was insensitive to physical surroundings, as, for example, landscape. Mrs. Hadfield speaking of Williams and his father says :

> Neither of them took much notice of the countryside through which they walked. In the first place, they could not see it particularly well [as they were both short-sighted]. But chiefly, the lanes and fields of Hertfordshire were for them a privacy, and a freedom from the atmosphere which silently made it clear that literature was not a business by which one could afford to live.[62]

Life as it is to be lived was always Williams's great concern. Despite his frequently avouched love of the city, I suspect it was the city as people of which he was fond, and not the city as place. The faculty for appreciating streams and trees is not so different from that for appreciating streets and tenements.

---

60. Lewis, Arthurian Torso, p.197.

61. From the title of one of the poems of St. John of the Cross, quoted by Heppold, p.326.

62. Hadfield, Introduction to Charles Williams, p.17.

Williams did love people, and human psychology is one of the major terms in which the business of literature may be carried on. But the usual modes in that case are either the narrative or the dramatic. Williams was interested in human psychology in relation to what he could perceive of spiritual reality. As fiction is less committed to the completely human embodiment of ideas than drama, the novel or narrative poetry were more suitable forms for his purpose. In his novels, figurative language is at the service of the characters. It is used to convey their moral and spiritual development. Usually, as with the Tarot, or Jonathan Drayton's paintings, Williams carefully (and more than once) explains his central image in the terms in which he wishes it to be understood. Having established this, then he uses aspects of it throughout his work, exploiting the symbolic significance he has predicated of it. What carries conviction is the psychology of the characters; what adds dimension is the symbolism. On its own, Williams's symbolism, as I have suggested, does not carry conviction. The tragedy of his Pelion-nin cycle is that the characters are all too often submerged by the symbolism and the latter lies inert.

Still, poetry has resources other than its psychological or metaphoric merits. There is always its rhythm. Had Williams been successful here, then all his other difficulties might have been ultimately surmountable. Anne Ridler says that,

> it is here, I think, in the region of the "auditory imagination", that Williams's poetic equipment shows deficiency. Miss Helen Gardner, in her very interesting discussion of Mr. Eliot's term, speaks of it as the "special feeling for

> the connections of words in sound and meaning", which makes Chaucer a greater poet than Langland, even though "he might well be called a less profoundly serious one"; it is, as she further defines it in speaking of Dryden, the "power to compel words to serve his particular purpose while respecting their general meaning". This instinctive power, I think, Williams lacked....[83]

Academic study is capable of discovering in any writer of genius and integrity a wealth of intellectual complexity which may be extremely interesting in itself. Unfortunately, it also tends to distance the student from his own literary response to a work. Williams's poetry almost asks to be made into a research industry. But, when all is said and done, unless the work is informed by the "instinctive power" of the poet, its true place is in the history of ideas and not in the history of literature. This is my own considered judgement upon Williams's Baliouain cycle. He tried to become "modern"[84] by learning from the technique of Hopkins, but his imitation of the latter's method had disconcertingly the opposite effect to that for which he himself praised Hopkins' poetry. Williams said of it:

> Alliteration, repetition, interior rhyme, all do the same work: first, they persuade us of the existence of a vital and surprising poetic energy; second, they suspend our attention from any rest until the whole thing, whatever it may be, is said.[85]

---

83. Ridler, Image of the City, p.lxix.

84. See War in Heaven, p.96.

85. Introduction to The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. Robert Bridges, 2nd edn. (London, 1930), p.xii.

Far from recapturing the vigorous onrush of verse to be found in Hopkins, Williams achieves frequently an almost staccato effect. This is largely a result of the way in which he appears to have seldom thought at paragraph level, and frequently not even at that of the complex sentence; but rather at the level of short co-ordinate clauses. These tend to correspond with line or half-line divisions, as in the following passage:

> In the rent saffron[86] sun hovered the Grail.
> Galahad stood in the arch of Carbonek;
> the people of Pellas ran to meet him.
> His eyes were sad; he sighed for Lancelot's pardon. (WW. 81)

Here, the continuing pattern of alliteration is at odds with the abrupt syntactic units. On the other hand, sometimes, though the syntax is fluent, the stylistic devices weigh heavily, as being almost too contrived. Take, for instance, this passage which C.S. Lewis admired for its "images of intense speed and power."[87]

> An infinite flight of doves from the storming sky
> of Logres...
> ... guiding by modulated strokings
> on each spoke of the helm the vessel from the realm of
> Arthus,
> lifted oak and elm to a new-ghosted power.

---

86. Williams's use of the epithet "saffron" in this poem, The Last Voyage, is one of his more striking descriptive touches. However, I suspect the image is literary in origin. Williams was reading Yeats fairly early - The Silver Stair begins with a quotation from The Shadowy Waters - and in Yeats's The Wanderings of Oisin, "saffron" occurs at least three times. Williams also had a good memory.

87. Lewis, Arthurian Torso, p.178.

The hosted wings trapped the Infant's songs
blown back, tossed down, thrown
along the keel, the song hastening the keel
along the curve of the sea-way, the helm fastening
the whole ship to the right balance of the staresses.... (TRT, 85-86)

My own reaction is that the density of "interior rhyme,"[88] added to the long five- or even six-stress lines, produces an effect of laboured movement, rather than of "motion [which] is taut and vibrant,"[89] to use Lewis's phrase. To be fair to Williams, he himself acknowledged a dissatisfaction with this particular device; and, in The Region of the Summer Stars, he was "more sparing" of "interior rhyme." He himself says that, in Taliessin through Logres, "one poem, The Son of Lancelot, is very nearly free" of it.[90]

Lest it should be thought I have been too harsh on Williams, I will now look very briefly at The Son of Lancelot which I consider to be the finest poem in the whole cycle. The aspect which I wish to stress is the relationship of its imagery to the narrative framework. Basically, the story is derived from the last part of Malory's Book of Sir Tristram de Ivorey, that part which deals with Lancelot and Elaine, the daughter of King Pellas.[91] The source of this tale is the Prose Lancelot of which R.S. Loomis is highly critical as regards its literary merits. He is especially severe upon the "pious interpolator" who was responsible

---

88. Williams, Image of the City, p.105.
89. Lewis, Arthurian Torso, p.178.
90. Williams, Image of the City, p.105.
91. Vinaver's Malory, Books XI-XII, Chap. 10, pp.561-617.

for the account of the birth of Galahad.[92] Williams is equally critical of this same account in Malory who here followed his source closely; and, in his own version, Williams tightens up several of the details. He draws attention to two points in particular. After having approved the story of Galahad's conception, he then asks :

> And the next morning? Here, it must be admitted, Malory fell away from what the myth demanded. He sends Lancelot back to the Court, sends the princess after him, describes the anger of Guinevere, enchants Lancelot all over again, causes him to meet the Queen, and then drives him mad because of his disloyalty to her. There is some very good writing, but it will not do. What must obviously happen is that immediately on waking in the Castle of the Substitution, Lancelot realises the deception.... It is then that his mind should be overthrown....[93]

Malory says that Lancelot was mad for two years. Williams writes : "So far as I can see, there is no particular reason for two years; nine months would have been a better time."[94] In his own version of the story, Williams alters both these points. At the least, this gives a firmer outline to the narrative development. This madness of Lancelot's, he characterises as lycanthropy. Lancelot "grew / backward all summer" (TTL. 57), back into the animal part of man's nature.

The poem opens with a description giving the season of the year in which the action takes place. The Lupercalia is being celebrated in

---

92. Loomis, Development of Arthurian Romance, pp.96-98.
93. Williams, Image of the City, p.190.
94. Williams, loc. cit.

Rome. Thus it must be the 15th of February. At this festival near-naked youths went about the city striking women with thongs. This was supposed to confer fertility upon the women. The youths were called Luperci, which "suggests aversion of wolves or propitiation of a wolf god...."[95] This pagan festival continued long after the official conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity. It was not till AD.494 that Pope Gelasius I changed it into the feast of the Purification.[96] Williams draws upon this fact to contrast the pagan Lupercalia with the Pope celebrating Mass in the Lateran palace. If the season is the latter part of winter, then the period is the early Dark Age. At that time wolves were a very considerable menace all over Europe. However, one does tend to associate them more particularly with the north. So that for the action of the poem to take place during the winter in Logres (Britain) seems a natural outcome of the opening description. It is in such a setting that Lancelot's madness is conceived of as lycanthropy.

The poem is concerned to show how the spiritual part of man can be a development of his carnal nature. It is a poem about a birth - that of Galahad who is to surpass his father, Lancelot. But it is also a poem about incarnation. The Grail hero, who represents "that in the human soul which finds Christ,"[97] is flesh and blood, even as Lancelot is. Blancheflour sees "the veiled blood in child's tender cheeks" (PTL, 62).

---

95. The Oxford Classical Dictionary (Oxford, 1949), s.v. "Lupercalia."
96. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XIV (1968), s.v. "Lupercalia."
97. Williams, Image of the City, p.190, N[1].

So too, the spiritual must be allied to the animal. Both "Imperial and Lateran" are necessary to the preservation of Byzantium (TTL, 57). The wolf-imagery, therefore, is used to depict both the animal and the spiritual aspects of man. The nuns at Almesbury are "wolves of the heavens" (TTL, 55). Merlin, who protects Galahad from his father's mad rage, takes upon himself the form of "a giant white wolf" (TTL, 59). The proper condition is where the energy of the body is allied to the vision of the spirit. The "wolf in the flesh" (TTL, 58) is not so much the opposite of the spiritual, as an immature expression of it. Thus, for example, Blanchefleur is said to pray

> ... for the house-slaves
> along whose sinewy sides the wolf-cubs leapt,
> played in their hands, laired in their eyes, romped
> in the wrestle of arms and thighs, cubs of connection,
> haggard but held in the leash, foster-children
> of the City, foster-fellows of the Merciful Child. (TTL, 61-62)

In this poem, the setting provides the basic imagery of winter and of wolves. These fit easily into the world of medieval romance narrative. Moreover, the meaning which Williams wishes to convey by his imagery is completely consonant with that which emerges from the narrative.

In the story, Galahad symbolizes the new birth of natural man as a spiritually conscious being. This is why Lancelot had to be mad for nine months - the period of gestation. Frequently, spiritual love may be quickened in a person as a result of some human affection. So with Lancelot, "it is through his illumination by Guinevere that he is brought to Nelayne."[98] But spiritual growth often takes one's carnal nature

---

98. Williams, p.177.

by surprise. Williams says of Lancelot : "as always, the purpose of God produces salvation after an unexpected and shattering manner."[99] Salvation may arise out of a man's very weaknesses :

> ... as to each man in each man's hour
> the gratuitous grace of greed, grief, or gain,
> the measure pressed and overrunning... (TTT, 60).

This process of growth is effectively conveyed by the story : the period of Lancelot's madness, for example, corresponds to the inner conflict of man adjusting to the thought of living in a spiritual as well as a physical dimension. It is only after Lancelot has descended to the bestial that he at last emerges as "a new creature"[100] in the shape of his son, Galahad. This is typical of many conversions. The description of Lancelot as a wolf shows how Williams could on occasion use alliteration and the staccato phrase very effectively.

> Men, he hated; beast, he hungered; both
> stretched his sabres and strained his throat; rumble
> of memories of love in the gaunt belly told
> his instinct only that something edible might come.
> Slavering he crouched by the dark; arch of Caerbonk,
> head-high howling, lusting for food, living
> for flesh, a child's flesh, his son's flesh (TTT, 57)

In this poem, Williams has succeeded in making his own ideas seem to derive from the story he is telling. Here he is using the Arthurian legend properly as myth : so relating his thought to the framework that the two seem one.

---

99. Williams, loc. cit.
100. 2 Corinthians V, 17 (A.V.).

Yet, despite the success of this poem (and of a few others), I would still say that Williams's reputation would be more securely based today if, like Milton, he had never attempted to realise his ambition of embodying his ideas in an Arthurian framework. Neither history as such, nor historical romance, nor even (apart from Dante) the narrative literature of the era, really was responsible for Williams's attraction to the Middle Ages. In so far as he was attracted it was because he found certain theological concepts congenial. At his best, he was able to embody these in a contemporary setting, and thereby demonstrate their perennial truth. There are two examples in Williams's finest work, All Hallows' Eve, which I wish briefly to mention.

According to St. Teresa, the final degree of mystical prayer is expressed as if God watered the garden of a person's soul "by a heavy rain."[101] This is the idea that lies behind the picture of "October closing in a deluge"[102] at the end of All Hallows' Eve. The rain is symbolic of the grace of God reconciling the tensions of the rest of the novel. One is never in doubt, however, but what it is real rain that is falling. The last chapter has, like a refrain running through it, references to "the drumming rain - heavy, rapid, continuous"[103] upon the roof of the hall in Holborn. Similarly, the City of God is not seen as some strange otherworldly place, but as a transfiguration of an actual London. Whenever Betty Wallingford has been sent by the Clerk into the

---

101. Happold, The Anthology section of his Mysticism, p.313.
102. All Hallows' Eve, p.218.
103. Loc. cit.

world of spirit, that has been apprehended by her as London - but London seen in a "happy and fortunate"[104] light. At the end of the novel, it is said,

> she saw the whole City through which she had so often passed, vivid and real in... [a] glowing richness. But she lost that sight as she realised that the City opened all ways about her and the hall in which she stood, in which also the day-light now visibly expanded. She heard the early noises of London outside the hall. She sighed with delight, and turned to the morning joy.... [105]

For the person active in the life of Love, even the earthly city of London is the City of God. The City of God "is England and nowhere. Never and always."[106].

Williams is said to have considered his Taliessin cycle to be his most important contribution to literature. It is not unusual for a writer to be mistaken as to the relative value of his various works. If, as I believe, his real achievement lies, instead, in his novels, and in particular in All Hallows' Eve; then a proper appraisal of Williams at his best, unfortunately, lies largely outside the scope of this study.

---

104. Ibid., p.72.
105. Ibid., p.235.
106. T.S. Eliot, Little Gidding, Sec. I.

C O N C L U S I O N

The common factor in the work of David Jones and Charles Williams is their religious and, more specifically, Christian attitude to life. They both represent a reaction against the aesthetic approach to religion, prevalent among writers of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In this they have affinities with T.S. Eliot, and with the neo-scholastic philosophers of the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth century. Here, however, a distinction appears. Jones is an orthodox Roman Catholic. Doctrine, as such, is not his concern. His work has a decided sense of belonging to a long established tradition. Williams, though he draws upon Patristic thought and medieval mysticism, is really writing in a relatively recent tradition. As doctrine is central to his work, this aspect of it forces itself upon the reader's attention. Elizabeth Wright in her essay, Theology in the Novels of Charles Williams, has shown him to belong to that movement which derived much of its impetus from the Protestantism of Karl Barth.[1] Williams's religious attitudes are grounded in the Middle Ages only in so far as the views of that period are convenient and acceptable to him. As far as his Christian outlook is concerned, he is, above all, contemporary in his orientation. Nevertheless, whenever such a writer is aware of Christianity in a time perspective, and is appreciative, in particular, of its mystical aspects, medievalism will play a part in his work.

---

1. Stanford Honors Essays in Humanities, No. VI, Stanford (California), 1962, p.15.

To some extent, the interest in medieval theology which, in their varying degrees, writers such as Williams, Jones, and T.S. Eliot evince, is more akin to the spirit of the Middle Ages than was the nineteenth century preoccupation with romance.[2] The latter has survived, but in a much modified form. Though from the time of Coleridge medieval romance themes were often made to subserve a symbolic purpose, nevertheless the emphasis upon the narrative mode gained for them a reputation as primarily of value only as entertainment. A commonplace of criticism is the way in which the early twentieth century seemed to be reacting against myth and legend in general, only for those forms to reassert themselves in different guises - this time, anthropological and psychological.[3] The evolution may be observed in process in W.B. Yeats. For writers such as Yeats, Robert Graves, and Charles Williams, myth and legend cease to have a strong attraction in and for themselves. Their value lies in the lore of the human mind which they preserve. They are used to describe the inner world of man, rather than to make the outer world patient of wonder.[4] Though Williams revives the Arthurian legend, he is far removed from the sensibility of the previous century. He has little appreciation of Keats's "faery lands,"[5] or the "faerie" atmosphere of The Ancient Mariner.[6] For Williams, "faery"

---

2. See Lewis, Discarded Image, pp.9-10.
3. See Bernard Bergonzi, Heroes' Twilight: A Study of the Literature of the Great War (London, 1965), p.199.
4. See Charles Williams, Poetry at Present (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp.60-61.
5. Reason and Beauty, p.70.
6. English Poetic Mind, p.168.

represents a vague sense of "otherness," whereas he was concerned to define "otherness" and to make it accessible to man's normal mental processes. At his best Williams dealt with morality and metaphysics; but frequently he used magic as a metaphor for that precise apprehension of "otherness" which he advocated. Magic and romance are inextricably involved with one another. Where Williams erred, as compared with Yeats or Graves, was in attempting to embody his new attitude to the old material in a form too close to the traditional narrative pattern.

As for Williams's actual source material, apart from the story of Taliessin and the legends of Arthur, most of it came to him through a modern rather than a medieval medium. The Order of the Golden Dawn seems to have given Williams much of that symbolism which one might otherwise have termed medieval.[7] No doubt it was originally so; yet the fact remains, it reached Williams only after many permutations. Here, again, Williams is typical. He is following in the tradition of Yeats, and ultimately of Blake. Whereas the nineteenth century turned to the world of medieval romance for intimations of the supernatural, moderns have often resorted to the occult. As I understand it, the principal differences between these two approaches are as follows : the one is orientated towards the past, it sees perfection in terms of a lost Golden Age, it attempts to realise its ideal by a revival of the past; the other is especially conscious of the future, it

---

7. See Ridler, Image of the City, p.xxiv.

seeks power to mould it to its ideal, it is prophetic. Because so much occult material ultimately derives from the Middle Ages, medievalism keeps impinging upon that subject. However, the connection is accidental rather than essential.

Bernard Bergonzi has drawn attention to the fact that while "the Imagists were the first poets of a demythologised world," and while Jones had "an Imagist's accuracy of response to the data of the physical world," yet Jones also made great use of myth.[8] In a way, this is not really surprising. In the context of English poetry, the countryside is the most persistent source of imagery from "the data of the physical world." I would suggest that there is a tradition in modern English literature which combines a sense of the world of nature with a sense of the past.

In the work of Thomas Gray, these two aspects of his literary sensibility are present in different poems, though most of these are characterised by a common melancholy. This mood is strongly marked in the poetry of Arnold, where again it is associated with a sensitivity towards nature and the past. For both poets, certain values which they cherish are identified with the life of the countryside and of the Middle Ages. The implicit contrast is with the present age. An elegiac tone consequently seems to pervade their work. Hardy is close to Arnold in mood, but much more particularised in his projection of it. He is more explicitly aware of the changes which transform past into present. More-

---

8. Bergonzi, Heroes' Twilight, pp. 198, 201, resp.

over, he was well placed by circumstance to watch the erosion of the countryside, and of the values which had flourished there, by the gradual encroachment of modern life. Scott is the forerunner of Hardy. Both novelists laid equal stress upon locality, but Hardy is less historical and more rural in his imagination. David Jones's tendency is, like Scott, to emphasise the close relationship between history and locality. He is keenly aware of the decline of a certain attitude to life whereby men felt themselves part of the total universe, rather than isolated within it because of their own man-made environment. Somewhere between the approach of Scott and Hardy is that of J.R.R. Tolkien. The world of his books, if not historical, is at least firmly based upon his vast knowledge of the medieval period. However, his whole work is informed by a very vivid sense of nature. Once more an elegiac tone pervades much of his work. It is the absence of any real hint of nostalgia for the past and for the countryside which prevents me from trying to associate Coleridge and Keats with this group of writers. The mention of these two names reminds one that a return to nature and a return to the past are probably the two most obvious characteristics of English romanticism. So that the tradition which I have briefly outlined, and to which other names such as those of Tennyson and Belloc might be added, is in all probability an outcome of the reaction of certain temperaments to contemporary developments, such as the industrialisation of Britain - a reaction which has resulted in a fusion of two of the principal characteristics of romanticism.

There is a further connection between the eighteenth century and

the tradition to which Jones and Tolkien belong. C.S. Lewis has shown that "the barbarian elements," that is the Old Norse, Anglo-Saxon, and Celtic elements in medieval literature, probably underlie that aspect of the Middle Ages which the late eighteenth century revived.[9] In Jones and Tolkien, these materials are tapped directly, and with due appreciation of their basic qualities such as the presentation of the heroic ethos. Within their own limitations, writers such as Gray, Scott, Tennyson, Arnold, Jones and Tolkien have all tried to enter into the spirit of the older literatures.

This raises an interesting paradox so far as my study of Jones and Williams is concerned. Jones is modern in style and traditional in sensibility; Williams is modern in sensibility and traditional in style. I am, of course, speaking in general terms. Reducing the above statement to a critical assessment I would say that David Jones had discovered a style capable of expressing certain enduring ideas; whereas Charles Williams had discovered ideas for which he had no adequate means of expression.[10]

There is evidence that a quite different medievalism from any discussed so far is at present in the process of emerging. In literature the most potent influences are literary. For centuries of European writers, Greece has been Homer, and Rome, Virgil. There are clear indications that Dante is rapidly becoming the Middle Ages. His influence

---

9. Lewis, Discarded Image, pp.7-9.
10. I except the better of Williams's novels from this strictures.

is seen not simply in the overt imitation of a Rossetti, but in the influence exercised by his system of ideas upon writers as various as Charles Williams and Robert Penn Warren. The place of Dante in the twentieth century is a subject for a future critic; but to ignore this literary phenomenon would be to do less than justice to one of my two authors. For Williams will undoubtedly be remembered for many years whenever the influence of Dante is being traced.

In conclusion, all that I wish to say is this : while both David Jones and Charles Williams draw upon medieval material, this is more integral to the literary objectives of the former than of the latter. Charles Williams is primarily concerned with the present; David Jones with the past in the present. Herein lies the distinction between their "medievalisms." For difference in stature as writers, the measure is style.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Only those works referred to in the text or the notes are listed below.

The Works of David Jones

In Parenthesis, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1937.

The Anathemata, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1952.

Epoch and Artist: Selected Writings, ed. Harman Grisewood, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1959.

"The Sleeping Lord," Agenda, V, David Jones Special Issue (Spring-Summer 1967), 28-54.

Works on David Jones

Alexander, Michael. "David Jones, Hierophant," Agenda, V, 116-123.

Bergonzi, Bernard. Heroes' Twilight: a Study of the Literature of the Great War, London, 1965, pp.190-212.

Blamires, David. "Kynge Arthur Ys Nat Dede," Agenda, V, 159-171.

Braybrooke, Neville. "David Jones, Painter and Poet," Queen's Quarterly, LXX (Winter 1963), 508-514.

Conquest, Robert. "The Art of the Enemy," Essays in Criticism, VII (January 1957), 42-55.

Johnston, John H. "David Jones: The Heroic Vision," The Review of Politics, XXIV (January 1962), 62-87.

Sanders, Nancy K. "The Inward Continuities," Agenda, V, 92-96.

Stoneburner, Charles J. "The Regimen of the Ship-star: A Handbook for The Anathemata of David Jones," unpub. doct. diss., Michigan, 1966.

Swank, Earle R. "David Michael Jones: In Parenthesis," in Lectures on Modern Novelists, Carnegie Series in English, No. 7, Pittsburgh, 1963.

The Works of Charles Williams

P o e t r y

The Silver Stair, London: Herbert and Daniel, [1912].

Poems of Conformity, London: Oxford University Press, 1917.

Divorce, London: Oxford University Press, 1920.

Windows of Night, London: Oxford University Press, [1924].

Taliessin through Logres, London: Oxford University Press, 1938.

The Region of the Summer Stars, London: Oxford University Press, 1950 (first pub. Poetry [London] Editions, 1944).

F i c t i o n

War in Heaven, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1947 (first pub. Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1930).

Many Dimensions, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1947 (first pub. Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1931).

The Place of the Lion, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1952 (first pub. Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1931).

The Greater Trumps, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1954 (first pub. Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1932).

Shadows of Ecstasy, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1948 (first pub. Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1933).

Descent into Hell, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1949 (first pub. by Faber, 1937).

All Hallows' Eve, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1945.

D r a m a

The Chaste Wanton in _Three Plays_, London: Oxford University Press, 1931.

Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury in Collected Plays, intro. John Heath-Stubbs, London: Oxford University Press, 1963 (first pub. by Oxford University Press in 1936).

The House of the Octopus in Collected Plays (first pub. London: Edinburgh House Press, 1945).

P r o s e W o r k s

Introduction to The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. Robert Bridges, 2nd. ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1930.

Poetry at Present, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930.

The English Poetic Mind, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932.

Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933.

He Came Down from Heaven and The Forgiveness of Sins, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1950. He Came Down from Heaven, first pub. London: Wm. Heinemann Ltd., 1938. The Forgiveness of Sins, first pub. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1942.

The Descent of the Dove, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1950 (first pub. London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1939).

Religion and Love in Dante, London: The Dacre Press, 1941.

Witchcraft, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1941.

The Figure of Beatrice, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1943.

Introduction to The Letters of Evelyn Underhill, London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1943.

The Figure of Arthur in Arthurian Torso, ed. C.S. Lewis, London: Oxford University Press, 1948.

"The Image of the City" and Other Essays, selected by Anne Ridler, London: Oxford University Press, 1958.

Works on Charles Williams

Auden, W.H. "Charles Williams: A Review Article," The Christian Century, LXXIII (May 2, 1956), 552-554.

Eliot, T.S. "The Significance of Charles Williams," The Listener, XXXVI (December 19, 1946), 894-895.

Hadfield, Alice M. An Introduction to Charles Williams, London, 1959.

La Lande, S.S.N.D., Sister M. "Williams' Pattern of Time in Descent into Hell," Renascence, XV (1963), 88-95.

Lewis, C.S. Williams and the Arthuriad in Arthurian Torso, London: Oxford University Press, 1948.

Ridler, Anne. Introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, London, 1958.

Sayers, Dorothy L. Introduction to James I, by Charles Williams, London: Arthur Barker Ltd., 1951.

Shideler, Mary McD. The Theology of Romantic Love: a Study in the Writings of Charles Williams, New York, 1962.

Wright, Elizabeth. Theology in the Novels of Charles Williams, Stanford Honors Essays in Humanities, No. VI, Stanford (California), 1962.

Other Works Cited

Abrams, Meyer H. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition, New York, 1958.

Anwyl, Edward. "The Book of Aneirin," The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1909-10, pp.95-136.

Atherton, James S. The Books at the Wake: a Study of the Literary Allusions in James Joyce's "Finnegans Wake," London, 1959.

Augustine, St. Confessions, trans. E.B. Pusey, with a Foreword by A.H. Armstrong (1962), Everyman's Library, 1907.

Barber, R.W. Arthur of Albion, London, 1961.

Barker, Sir Ernest. Introduction to The City of God, by St. Augustine, trans. John Healey, ed. R.V.G. Tasker, Everyman's Library, 1945.

Beers, Henry A. A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1902.

Bergson, Henri. Morality and Religion, London, 1935.

Bergsten, Staffan. Time and Eternity: A Study in the Structure and Symbolism of T.S. Eliot's "Four Quartets," London, 1960.

Birley, Robert. The Undergrowth of History: Some Traditional Stories of English History Reconsidered, Historical Association Pamphlet, General Series: G.30, 1955.

Bosworth, Joseph and Toller, T. Northcote. An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, London, 1898.

Bush, Douglas. Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry, New York, 1957.

Butt, John. The Augustan Age, 2nd ed., London, 1962.

Chadwick, H.M. The Heroic Age, Cambridge, 1912.

Chambers, R.W. Widsith: a Study in Old English Heroic Legend, Cambridge, 1912.

Chapman, Raymond. The Victorian Debate: English Literature and Society, London, 1968.

Collingwood, R.G. The Idea of History, Oxford, 1946.

Essays in the Philosophy of History, ed. with intro. William Debbins, Austin, 1965.

Collingwood, R.G. and Myres, J.N.L. Roman Britain and the English Settlements, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1937.

Davie, Donald, ed. with intro. The Late Augustans, London, 1958.

Dawson, Christopher. The Making of Europe: an Introduction to the History of European Unity, London, 1932 (with the Preface of 1946).

The Spirit of the Oxford Movement, London, 1945.

Medieval Essays, London, 1953.

Edwards, John G. ed. with intro. Littere Wallie, Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales, History and Law Series No. 5, Cardiff, 1940.

Ekwall, Eilert. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names, 4th ed., Oxford, 1960.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XIV, 1968.

Fairchild, Hoxie N. The Romantic Quest, Philadelphia, 1931.

Religious Trends in English Poetry, Vol. IV, New York, 1957.

Foss, Martin. Symbol and Metaphor in Human Experience, Lincoln (U.S.A.), 1949.

Frazer, Sir James G. The Golden Bough, 12 Vols., London, 1913-15.

Galbraith, V.H. Historical Research in Medieval England, London, 1951.

Giles, J.A., trans. The Works of Gildas and Nennius, London, 1841.

Gilson, Etienne. History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages, 1955.

Gooch, G.P. History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1913.

Gordon, E.K. trans. Anglo-Saxon Poetry, Everyman's Library, 1906.

Green, John R. A Short History of the English People, 2 Vols. Everyman's Library, 1915 (rev. 1960).

Groom, Bernard. "W.P. Ker and the Teaching of Literature," The College Courant, XX (Martinmas 1968), 4-16.

Guest, Lady Charlotte, trans. The Mabinogion, Everyman's Library, 1906.

Hague, Rene, trans. The Song of Roland, London, 1937.

Happold, F.C. Mysticism: a Study and an Anthology, Penguin Books, 1963 (enl. 1964).

Heer, Fredrich. The Medieval World, London, 1962.

Hoffman, Ernst. "Platonism in Augustine's Philosophy of History," Philosophy and History, edd. R. Klibansky and H.J. Paton, New York, 1963 (first pub. Oxford, 1936).

Hough, Graham, The Last Romantics, London, 1949.

House, Humphry. "The Ancient Mariner," in English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Meyer H. Abrams, New York, 1960, pp. 170-195.

Hulme, T.E. Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art, London, 1960 (first pub. 1924).

Hunt, John D. The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination: 1848-1900, London, 1968.

Jackson, Kenneth H. The Gododdin: the Oldest Scottish Poem, Edinburgh, 1969.

Jacob, E.F. The Fifteenth Century, Oxford, 1961.

Jones, Gwyn and Jones, Thomas, trans. The Mabinogion, Everyman's Library, 1949.

Ker, W.P. "The Literary Influence of the Middle Ages," in The Cambridge History of English Literature, edd. A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller, X (Cambridge, 1913), 217-241.

Knowles, Dom David. The Evolution of Medieval Thought, London, 1962.

Kroeber, Karl. Romantic Narrative Art, Madison, 1960.

La Taille, Maurice de. The Mystery of Faith, London, 1941.

Leclerq, Dom Jean and Vandebroucke, Dom Francois. The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, Vol. II of A History of Christian Spirituality, London, 1968.

Leff, Gordon. Medieval Thought: St. Augustine to Ockham, Penguin Books, 1958.

Lewis, C.S. The Allegory of Love, New York, 1958 (first pub. 1936).

Mere Christianity, Fontana Books, 1955.

The Discarded Image, Cambridge, 1964.

Lloyd, John E. A History of Wales, 3rd ed., 2 Vols., London, 1939.

Loomis, Roger S. The Development of Arthurian Romance, London, 1963.

Mackenzie, W.M., ed. The Poems of William Dunbar, Edinburgh, 1932.

Maritain, Jacques. Art and Scholasticism with Other Essays, London, 1932 (first pub. 1930).

Malory, Sir Thomas. Works, ed. Eugène Vinaver, Oxford Standard Authors, London, 1954.

Monsen, Ewing, trans. Heimskringla: The Lives of the Norse Kings, Cambridge, 1932.

Moss, H. St. L.B. The Birth of the Middle Ages, London, 1935.

Myres, J.N.L. See above, under Collingwood.

Onions, C.T. A Shakespeare Glossary, 2nd ed. rev., Oxford, 1958.

Owen, Trefor M. Welsh Folk Custom, Cardiff, 1959.

The Oxford Classical Dictionary, Oxford, 1949.

Peckham, J., Archb. Cant. Registrum Epistolarum, Vol. II, ed. Charles T. Martin, Memorials of Great Britain, London, 1884.

Peckham, Morse. "Historiography and The Ring and the Book," Victorian Poetry, VI (Autumn-Winter 1968), 243-257.

Powell, T.G.E. The Celts, London, 1958.

Raine, Kathleen. William Blake, Writers and their Work, London, 1951 (rev. ed. 1965).

Reid, Margaret J.C. The Arthurian Legend, Edinburgh, [1938].

Rhys, Sir John. Studies in the Arthurian Legend, Oxford, 1891.

"The Origin of the Welsh English and Kindred Notes," Y Cymmrodor, Vol. XVIII, 1905.

Preface to La Morte d'Arthur, by Sir Thomas Malory, Everyman's Library, 1906.

Rhys, Sir John and Brynmor-Jones, David. The Welsh People, 2nd & rev. ed., London, 1900.

Rolt, C.E., trans. with intro. Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology, London, 1920.

Rymer, Thomas, ed. Foedera, Vol. II, London, 1705.

Sayers, Dorothy L., trans. with intro. The Divine Comedy 1 Hell by Dante Alighieri, Penguin Books, 1949.

Sayers, Dorothy L. and Reynolds, Barbara, trans. The Divine Comedy 3 Paradise by Dante Alighieri, Penguin Books, 1962.

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd ed. rev., Oxford, 1955.

Skene, William F. The Four Ancient Books of Wales, 2 Vols., Edinburgh, 1868.

Spencer, Sidney. Mysticism in World Religion, Penguin Books, 1963.

St. John's Missal for Every Day, rev. by the Very Rev. J. Canon Rea, Birmingham, 1963.

Stenton, Sir Frank M. Anglo-Saxon England, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1947.

Stones, E.L.G. Edward I, London, 1960.

Taylor, Henry O. The Medieval Mind, 2 Vols., London, 1911.

Thorpe, Lewis, trans. The History of the Kings of Britain, by Geoffrey of Monmouth, Penguin Books, 1966.

Vandenbroucke, Dom Francois. See above, under Leclerq.

Waddell, Helen, ed. with trans. Mediaeval Latin Lyrics, London, 1929.

Waite, Arthur E. The Hidden Church of the Holy Graal, London, 1909.

The Secret Doctrine in Israel: a Study of the Zohar and its Connections, London, 1913.

Wolland, Dennis S.R. The Pre-Raphaelites in Literature and Art, London, 1953.

Weston, Jessie L. From Ritual to Romance, New York, 1957 (first pub. 1920).

White, T.H., ed. with trans. The Book of Beasts: a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century, London, 1954.

Williams, Gwyn. An Introduction to Welsh Poetry: From the Beginnings to the Sixteenth Century, London, 1953.

The Burning Tree: Poems from the First Thousand Years of Welsh Verse, London, 1956.

Williams, Taliesin, trans. The Iolo Manuscripts: a Selection of Ancient Welsh Manuscripts, collected by Edward Williams ("Iolo Morganwg"), Llandovery, 1848.

Wolters, Clifton, trans. with intro. The Cloud of Unknowing, Penguin Books, 1961.

trans. with intro. Revelations of Divine Love, by Julian of Norwich, Penguin Books, 1966.

Yeats, W.B. Essays and Introductions, London, 1961.